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ABSTRACT

This volume contains 14 essays and commentaries on youth development penned by educators, policymakers, and leaders of youth development organizations. The papers, written to commemorate 10 years of American Youth Policy Forum's service, were originally presented at a forum in Washington, D.C., in January 2003. Following are the papers: "Genesis and Retrospective" (Samuel Halperin); "High School Reform: Common Standards, Flexible Pathways" (Robert B. Schwartz); "Choices Within a Strong Academic Framework" (Gene Bottoms); "The Fading Promise of Standards-Based Reform" (Warren Simmons); "Another Argument for Higher Academic Expectations" (John F. Jennings); "New Pathways to Civic Renewal" (Alan Casey and Michael Brown); "First: Grow Service-Learning" (James Kielsmeier); "Service as a Strategy for Youth Development" (Shirley Saqawa); "Flip the Script: Self-Sufficiency and Fulfillment for All" (Dorothy Stoneman); "Opportunities to Build Supporting Structures" (Karen Hein); "Making Sure There Are No Cracks" (Andrew B. Hahn); "Building One System for Youth Development and Opportunity" (Hilary Pennington); "Dismantling the Schools-to-Prison Pipeline" (Christine Sturgis); and "Putting the Will Behind the Vision" (Wendy D. Puriefoy). (WFA)

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Shaping the Future of American Youth:

Youth Policy in the 21st Century

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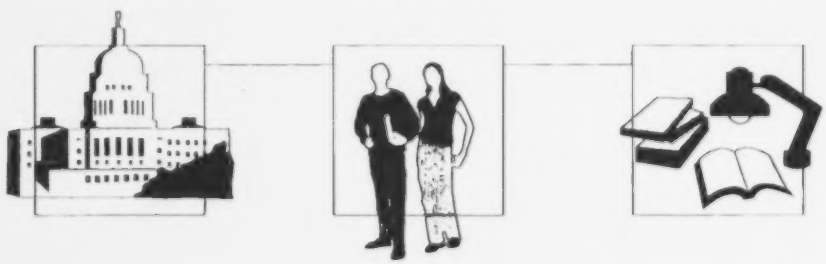

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American Youth Policy Forum

-- Bridging Youth Policy, Practice and Research

The **American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)** is a nonprofit professional development organization based in Washington, DC. Our mission is to bridge policy, practice and research by providing nonpartisan learning opportunities for professionals working on youth policy issues at the national, state and local levels.

Our goal is to enable policymakers and their aides to be more effective in their professional duties and of greater service—to Congress, the Executive Branch, state legislatures, governors and national organizations—in the development, enactment, and implementation of sound policies affecting our nation's young people. We believe that knowing more about youth issues—both intellectually and experientially—will help these busy professionals to formulate better policies and perform their jobs more effectively. AYPF does not lobby or take positions on pending legislation. Rather, we work to develop better communication, greater understanding and enhanced trust among these professionals, and to create a climate that will result in constructive action for the benefit of the nation's young people and their families and communities.

Each year, AYPF conducts 35 to 45 learning events (forums, discussion groups and field trips) and develops policy reports disseminated nationally. For more information about these activities and other publications, visit our website at www.aypf.org

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SHAPING THE FUTURE OF AMERICAN YOUTH:

Youth Policy in the 21st Century

Anne Lewis, Editor

American Youth Policy Forum

2003

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GENESIS

Anniversaries are especially appropriate occasions for reflection—reflection on where we have been and, more important, where we wish to go.

In that spirit, the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) decided to celebrate its Tenth Anniversary in January 2003 by inviting 14 of America's leading experts on youth affairs – analysts, activists, advocates, institution-builders – to write the essays and commentaries in this volume. These leaders accepted our challenge to step back from the press of their fully committed working days and reconsider the development of their particular field of youth affairs over the past decade, take a leap into the future, and sketch their personal hopes and visions for a positive and creative future for American youth in the decade ahead.*

The authors were not chosen by accident. Each is among the United States' leading "movers and shakers," men and women who labor both hard and effectively to improve the life chances of America's young people in a society that so much needs their youthful talents and enthusiasm. Each author also played an important role in AYPF's successful development since our founding in 1993. They mentored us, shared their projects with us, set examples of personal and professional excellence, and inspired us to grow AYPF into a vibrant, flexible and optimistic vehicle for the continuing professional development of workers in the youth policy community. As AYPF rededicates itself to a new decade of service to the youth policy community — continuing our mission of *bridging youth policy, practice and research*—we look to them again for wise counsel and guidance.

*These papers and commentaries, written to commemorate ten years of the American Youth Policy Forum's service to the youth policy community, were originally presented at four forums on Capitol Hill, January 10, 17, 24, 31, 2003. Briefs on these forums may be found at www.aypf.org/forumbriefs/briefs.htm

RETROSPECTIVE: The Context for this Book

Interest in youth policy and practice flourished in the United States in the 1980s and '90s, continuing into the 21st Century. Acting through their governments, foundations and civic institutions, Americans gave greater prominence and priority than ever before to the self-evident, if often ignored, proposition that the talents and well-being of American youth will determine the future vitality of the American society and economy.

Americans turned first and foremost to the nation's schools and colleges. There, some 69 million students and an education workforce of over 9 million faculty and support staff labor to educate coming generations. Although previous decades of opinion polls found most Americans relatively contented with their schools, a new wave of urgency about the value and necessity of early learning and pre-K-12 education reform swept the nation. Politicians, media, parents and employers seemed to agree that our schools were not good enough to prepare young people for the challenges of a globally interdependent, economically competitive, culturally diverse world coping with multiple scientific and technological revolutions.

A century earlier, less than ten percent of our youth had earned a high school diploma, but by the year 2000 two or more years of postsecondary education were becoming essential to economic and social success in the new century. Second only to issues of health care, education became the highest domestic concern of the electorate. At every level of government, funding for education increased. Families, too, dug deeper into their own pockets to support everything from preschool education, home schooling and private schools to postsecondary and graduate education.

While disagreements persist about what students need to know and be able to do, almost everywhere the mantra of education reform is repeated: higher expectations for student effort, higher standards for both student and teacher academic performance, assessments geared to more challenging curricula, and public accountability measures to ensure positive learning outcomes for all students, not just some.

Several issues frame the education debate at the turn of the new century: that large and impersonal schools need to become smaller, providing the support of mini-communities; that because every student requires knowledge and skills at a higher level than ever before, it is intolerable for any school or school district to fail to educate any segment of its population; that schools need to encourage more innovation and choice as they simultaneously accommodate an amazingly diverse student body, often educationally and socially at risk; and that new attention to raising the quality of the teaching profession must become an urgent national priority.

How to accomplish all these things, as required by the landmark, bipartisan *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)*, promises years of constructive struggle, contentious debate and occasional backsliding. But philosophical commitment to the overarching goals of NCLB seems near-universal, as all four of the essays in **Part I** clearly demonstrate.

Along with a strong focus on school reform and academic achievement, the public has more recently encouraged and supported youth in their efforts to engage in service in their schools and communities. Volunteerism and service to others have long been basic values of the American people. Scouting, 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs and thousands of secular and religious manifestations of the basic civic values have engaged millions of youth in every generation.

Beginning in 1990, however, under both Republican and Democratic national administrations, service and volunteerism joined schooling as major expressions of American youth policy and practice. AmeriCorps funding fueled an expansion of civic inventions: City Year, YouthBuild, Teach for America, Public Allies, service and conservation corps, and dozens of others. The Corporation for National and Community Service, along with foundation funding, encouraged a blossoming of service-learning and civic engagement in the nation's schools and colleges, tying real-world experience to deeper understanding of students' academic curricula. After the tragedy of September 11, 2001, a new surge of patriotism combined with traditional values induced calls for even greater service opportunities. These include a doubling of enrollments in the Peace Corps, expansion of domestic service programs and possible new opportunities for service stimulated by the U.S. Freedom Corps.

Altogether, this was a decade of remarkable social invention and set the stage for service to become, as some had long urged, a central rite of passage and development on the road to responsible adulthood. The essays in **Part II** of this volume call for deeper commitments to national and community service and demonstrate considerable new thought and energy for the tasks ahead.

Despite these growing public expressions about the promise and potential contributions of American youth, concern continued to be expressed about the negative behaviors exhibited by some of our youth and how to most effectively help them avoid risky behaviors and make a successful transition from adolescence to responsible and productive adulthood.

Drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, crime and delinquency, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, teen unemployment and school dropouts remained serious concerns of taxpayers and policymakers. In response, all levels of government, community-based nonprofit organizations, religious and voluntary societies, and foundations attempted a bewildering array of piecemeal "fixes." In some cases, the incidence of these youth problems did, in fact, decline. The declines—whether due to the piecemeal interventions, to an improved economy in the 1990s which reduced the poverty correlated with many problems, or to a general spread of enlightenment among youth themselves about the self-destructive consequences of their behavioral choices—continue to be the subject of vigorous, often ideological, dispute.

Beyond dispute, however, is the fact that many American youth at the dawn of the 21st Century, especially those in large urban centers, faced unacceptably high dropout rates that have barely budged in three decades, with unemployment and homelessness rising sharply once again with the 2000-2003 downturn in the economy. More troubling for the future of some two and one-half million "disconnected" youth is the absence of any consistent and concerted national policy or program to prepare out-of-school youth to achieve economic self-sufficiency, let alone fulfill their human potential.

Attempting to fill the void created by the public's relative lack of interest in the condition of out-of-school and disconnected youth were a host of community-based efforts to reclaim young people: service and conservation corps, local affiliates of YouthBuildUSA, STRIVE, Center for Employment Training (CET), Opportunities Industrialization Centers (OIC) and hundreds of small, usually struggling, service providers. As the 20th Century concluded, there was mounting evidence that such scattered, mostly homegrown, efforts were demonstrating increasing effectiveness in reclaiming youth for educational, employment and social success.

The 1990s were also marked by the relatively rapid spread of a philosophical perspective called

"youth development." To its proponents and practitioners, youth development means paying attention to, and investing in, the *strengths* of youth as resources, considering ways to anticipate and prevent problems that blight young lives and providing the supports and opportunities that young people need to blossom into competent, confident and caring adults. To quote one wise observation, youth need not only to be "problem-free but also fully prepared" to take up their roles as skilled workers, strong family members, lifelong learners and contributing members of a democratic community. Schooling and all aspects of out-of-school time—including informal education, workforce and career development, service, recreation, youth leadership and youth voice—must work together to break down the isolated silos of adult-created interventions in the lives of young people. How to build a culture that is profoundly respectful of youth and that simultaneously, provides effective workforce development skills and social supports for youth to become both self-sufficient and self-fulfilled is the focus of the essays in **Part III**.

Over the decades of the 1990s, the conviction emerged and took strong root that youth have a multitude of needs and issues that cannot be effectively addressed by single strategies pursued by any one of society's social subsystems or by any single program. Successful intervention requires genuine *partnerships* that address the multiple needs of young people. Also essential are intermediary mechanisms that bridge separate, often competing, institutional missions and turf so as to connect and concentrate resources, knowledge and talent.

Neither schools, nor any other institution or program, can by themselves meet the range of services, opportunities and interests that an effective youth-centered, customer-friendly strategy requires. Only a broad-based coalition of local and community-based providers working in concert can provide for the full range of health, safety, mental health, recreation, workforce preparation and civic engagement needs of young people. Even with the growth in the 1990s of "one-stop" service centers of various types and the concentration of resources and services in Empowerment Zones and Youth Opportunity Grant neighborhoods under the Workforce Investment Act, very considerable realignment of programs and resources is essential. That is the argument of the essays in **PART IV**: "Building One System for Youth Development and Opportunity."

By the 21st Century it was clear that genuine system building was more a question of the public's attitudes about our youth than one solely of organizational or bureaucratic architecture and engineering. Building One System requires holistic thinking that "leaves no youth behind," that refuses to permit large numbers of our youth to languish in prisons and jails, or find only menial work that respects neither their humanity nor their desire to be actors, not merely subjects, in determining their place in society. Youth advocates and practitioners agreed that a comprehensive and just system would

- guarantee every young person full access to high quality options after completing high school, including postsecondary education and opportunities to earn family-sustaining wages;
- enable every youth to grow as a responsible, contributing citizen to the community and the nation;
- offer multiple opportunities for development of all the interests and abilities of young people;

- provide *all* young people, not just some, mutually-supportive networks of services and opportunities that develop competence and lead to self-fulfillment.

The essays in **PART IV** explore the implications of these lofty goals set amidst the social trends at the turn of the 21st Century. They are thoughtful guides to how recent trends might influence the nation's policies for education reform, service and volunteerism, youth development, and comprehensive and effective system building in the future.

Taken together, the essays offer a vision of a better America in which every young person would be able to contribute energy, enthusiasm and talent to the creation of "a more perfect Union." Visionary goals, the authors and commentators remind us, require *action,* a massive mobilization of public *will* and, especially, courageous *leadership* at every level of society. That "more perfect Union" is within our reach. Working together as partners, youth and adults can make it happen.

Samuel Halperin

Founder and Senior Fellow

PART I

HIGH SCHOOL REFORM: COMMON STANDARDS, FLEXIBLE PATHWAYS

Robert B. Schwartz

Youth development begins by making sure all young people have the academic skills to succeed after high school, no matter what path they choose. The challenge to public schools is that word "all." Standards-based education reform intends to extend a quality education to every student, and this focus on the performance of students and schools is having a positive effect in elementary schools. As the reforms become stronger at the secondary level, the strategies will need to adapt to different circumstances and be given greater flexibility by policymakers, but stick to the goal of high standards for all.

The performance of our public schools makes headlines, day after day. Once an issue only for parents, some researchers and policymakers, it now is a significant enough public policy issue to warrant continued attention in the media and major legislative actions at all levels of government. To underscore how recently we have turned our attention to public school performance, I recall a conversation in the mid-1990s with Sol Hurwitz, then president of the Committee for Economic Development, and the late Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers. They were bitterly complaining about the failure of the New York Times to pay attention to any education issues other than the latest round of political squabbling between the New York City mayor and whoever happened to be schools chancellor that week. In Boston, where I worked on education issues in the 1970s and 1980s, education coverage focused almost exclusively on busing and the political shenanigans of the Boston School Committee, with hardly a mention of other state and local education policy issues and precious little attention to school performance.

In the last five years, all that has changed. Not only is education a front-burner political issue, right up there with the economy, health care and public safety, but the focus of public attention is increasingly on results. People will debate how to achieve results and how to measure them. Do we have the right measures? Can a school's performance be adequately summed up solely by a set of numbers derived mostly from test scores? But I think it is beyond debate that the academic standards movement focuses national attention like no other prior reform policies on closing the achievement gaps between our highest and lowest performing schools and students.

A Consensus About 'All'

The single most significant political contribution to date of the standards movement is its effect on how both educators and the general public define the purposes of public education and on appropriate criteria for measuring success. Our schools are subject to pressure from a wide variety of constituency groups, each pressing its own agenda and priorities. Yet, there is now a quite broad consensus that the principal purpose of our public education system is to equip all young people with a foundation of academic skills and knowledge sufficient to enable them to function successfully in postsecondary education or in a high-performance workplace. This may not sound new or radical, but for an education system that historically has expected only some of its students to master challenging academic content, it represents a major significant shift in focus. Despite our egalitarian rhetoric, for most of the last century our schools have functioned, in fact, largely as sorting and selecting machines, separating those deemed to be "college material" from the rest, and

offering only the former group a rich academic diet. Even within homogeneously grouped classes, we expected student performance to follow the bell-shaped curve. If half the students mastered the material and the others didn't, that simply reflected "the normal distribution of academic talent."

I am not naïve enough to argue that the standards movement has changed people's fundamental belief systems, but this is an instance in which public policy affects individual as well as organizational behavior. Under the new rules of the game, success for the individual teacher means making sure all of his/her students reach the proficiency bar, not just the "academically talented." These new accountability pressures, as I have seen them play out in my home Commonwealth of Massachusetts, well in advance of the new federal law, can have dramatic effects. They drive a reallocation of resources toward those districts and schools with the highest concentrations of students at-risk of not meeting the state's proficiency requirements. In turn, this precipitates an intensive new focus on instructional improvement. Like all states, Massachusetts still has a long way to go before it can claim that virtually all of its students have reached a reasonable level of proficiency before high school graduation. Still, several of its urban districts, led by Boston, have made substantial progress in the last few years in raising student achievement. There is widespread agreement among policymakers that the success of the state's comprehensive education reform program will be measured largely by the continued progress of its lowest performing districts, schools and students. Again, this represents the most significant shift in public policy and public attitudes of this still-young movement.

What about hard data that support the reforms? Beyond the attitudinal shifts I attribute to the standards movement, is there evidence that our schools are actually getting better? We are now at a point where we can point to a handful of states (e.g., Connecticut, Kentucky, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina and Texas) where a decade or more of consistency in and continuity of reform policies have produced significant gains not only on a state's own assessments but on such independent measures as the National Assessment of Educational Progress. There are similar signs of progress in several of our large urban districts. The reality, however, is that in most places the policy changes wrought at the state level have not yet sufficiently penetrated classrooms, especially in our middle schools and high schools, to support any broad claims of success.

What will it take over the next decade to make sure standards-based reform results in changed outcomes for students, especially in those communities that have historically been least well served by our schools? More especially, what will it take to extend the gains we are now seeing quite routinely in the elementary grades through our middle grades and high schools?

Three Strategies for Reform

For the past two decades three competing strategies for education reform have been jostling with one another for support among educators and public policymakers. Although there is some overlap among them, and some reformers who claim membership in more than one camp, each strategy begins with a different definition of the problem.

The first, standards-based reform, is the one I alluded to earlier. Its premise is that the core problem in American education is the lack of clarity about mission. Thus, its response has been to define clear academic learning goals for students in each core subject at each level of school, measure progress annually against those goals, and hold school administrators accountable for results. This approach to reform draws mixed reviews from educators, but it enjoys overwhelming support among policymakers, as evidenced by the broad, bipartisan Congressional support for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 (NCLB) and by the past decade of work by governors and legislatures in 49 states to develop their own versions of standards-based reform.

The second strategy has no universally recognized name, but I think of it as network-based reform. It begins from the premise that the school, not the state, is the focal point of reform, and that building networks of schools sharing common principles and practices is the most promising strategy for spreading successful practices and scaling up demonstrably effective programs. Under this reform umbrella, one finds a remarkably diverse set of reform philosophies and models, including such large-scale national programs as America's Choice, Success for All, Coalition of Essential Schools, High Schools That Work, Core Knowledge, Montessori Schools and Edison Schools. Although some of these programs are highly prescriptive, as a general rule the advocates of network-based reform believe that improvement comes best, not from top-down mandates, but from providing opportunities for schools with similar goals and philosophies to band together to share resources and learn from one another. This approach, like the first, has now been incorporated into federal law through the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration program, authored by Representative David Obey and John Porter.

The third competing strategy for reform is market-based. Simply put, it believes the core problem is that public education is a monopoly in which the producers have all the power. Therefore, the response of market advocates is to create more competition and choice by transferring power into the hands of the consumer. By definition, this approach, like network-based reform, is highly eclectic on the content of reform. Its goal is to create a broad and diverse array of educational options, and then let parents, teachers and students choose among them. It also has been incorporated into public policy in a variety of ways, ranging from charter schools in 36 states and the District of Columbia to the public school choice provisions in NCLB. With the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Cleveland voucher case, we can confidently predict growing political pressure in many states to extend the market-based approach to private as well as public school choice.

As someone solidly in the standards-based reform camp for the past decade, I am now prepared to acknowledge that this approach, by itself, is not likely to get us where we need to go, especially when it comes to high schools. The standards strategy, necessary though it is, simply will not be sufficient to generate the fundamental structural and pedagogical reforms needed to ensure that virtually all students leave high school with the skills necessary to make a successful transition to college or work. I believe we will need to forge a new synthesis that draws on the strengths of all three of these reform strategies if we are to accomplish such an ambitious goal. This will require, among other things, a laying down of arms by the most ardent proponents in each of these reform camps and a willingness to acknowledge that none of us alone has the answer.

Putting the Three Strategies Together

What would a synthesis of strategies look like? From the standards movement, we absolutely want to retain the intensive focus on literacy and math that followed the decision of most states to hinge their accountability systems primarily on assessment results in these two subjects. This is not to suggest that these should be the only subjects taught, but rather that it should be the responsibility of all teachers in all subjects to pay continuous attention to developing the reading, writing and quantitative reasoning skills of all their students.

To those states that have not yet begun to develop assessments in other subjects, I would say, "Proceed with caution, especially at the high school level." As noted earlier, we now have a growing body of evidence from our largest urban districts that concentrated attention on literacy and math in the early grades is beginning to pay off. Districts that are producing results, like those included in the recent four-district study conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation for the Council of the Great City Schools, are adopting district-wide curricula, designing professional development programs

that are curriculum focused and tightly aligned with their standards, administering diagnostic assessments periodically throughout the year, and generally providing much stronger instructional guidance from the top. While this strategy makes sense in the elementary grades, we have little evidence that it can work for high schools where a growing body of evidence supports the need for more flexibility and for the development of a more diverse set of programmatic options.

Urban districts that are serious about reforming high schools are adopting a variety of strategies, but all have at their core the need to address questions of student motivation and engagement. One common denominator has been the desire to create more human-scale organizations where students feel a sense of membership and where face-to-face relationships among adults and students are more possible. This is being accomplished either through the creation of new small schools, often with financial assistance from national foundations like Gates and Carnegie, or through the restructuring of larger high schools into organizationally and thematically distinctive small schools or academies. The use of programmatic themes, built around broad career clusters, academic specialties or service opportunities, is the other common denominator, whether for new stand-alone schools or decentralized units within larger, restructured high schools. The challenge for states is to figure out how to structure some measure of quality control across an increasingly diverse array of secondary school options without creating a set of statewide assessments that unduly constrain the curricular and programmatic choices available to small schools.

More Creative Assessments

As long as states hold fast on requiring that all high school graduates have the reading, writing and math skills necessary to do credit-bearing college work or perform successfully in a high-performance workplace, they should be open to a variety of methods for assessing knowledge and skills in other subjects. One approach of several states is to develop end-of-course tests. These are designed to assure that courses labeled "Algebra 2" or "Chemistry" or "European History" have roughly the same content. Such tests place at least some constraint on the subjectivity of grading systems. The advantage of a course-based assessment system for high schools is that states can develop them in a wide variety of courses across the curriculum, students can complete them one at a time as they move through their high school years, and they need not be high stakes in order to accomplish their purpose (i.e., they can count for a significant enough percentage of a student's final grade to be taken seriously without being an absolute requirement for graduation).

A course-based state assessment system, however, does not answer the needs of schools that choose to develop more interdisciplinary approaches to curriculum, especially in the humanities and social sciences, and here states need flexibility. While states cannot reasonably be expected to review alternative assessment proposals from individual schools, why not encourage networks of schools with similar philosophies to work together on the development of interdisciplinary courses and assessments, which would then be subject to state review and approval? Under this model, the only high-stakes tests all students would be required to pass would be in reading, writing and math, but most other courses would have "medium-stakes" tests that were either state-developed or state-approved.

A very important by-product of creating a more flexible, course-based assessment system is to allow space for the development of courses with substantial opportunities for internships or other forms of field-based learning. One of the unfortunate unintended consequences of the standards movement is that too many high school administrators have responded to the new accountability pressures by reducing or eliminating the very learning opportunities most likely to engage student interest and motivate students to take academics more seriously. The pedagogical and organizational strengths of the best school-to-work programs need to infiltrate the mainstream

of American high school education if the large numbers of young people who now drop out are going to be motivated to stay in school and meet graduation requirements. This means high schools would offer applied learning opportunities, real-world projects and assignments, competency-based instruction with continuous assessment and feedback and a focus on team work and community-building. In short, I advocate both the creation of a much more diverse set of schools and program options for students and a much more engaged and engaging style of pedagogy in the mainstream.

But what about college admissions requirements? Won't they have to change before states and schools will feel comfortable moving toward a more flexible and diverse secondary school system? Perhaps, but if in fact high schools can produce a next generation of graduates with the reading, writing and math skills to do college-level work, my bet is that most institutions can be persuaded to relax a bit on the specific courses they require. But this shouldn't be left to chance. If state policymakers become persuaded that their "all students" goals can only be met by radically revamping their high schools, then they must bring higher education leaders to the table and engage them in instituting these reforms.

Heretical Thoughts About College Prep

I also want to say something heretical: I don't share in the growing consensus that all young Americans need to go to college, especially not to a four-year college. I do believe that all young people should leave high school equipped with a sufficient foundation of knowledge and skills to keep on learning, but for many young people that learning might well take place on the job, in the military, or in a postsecondary technical certificate program. It should tell us something that despite the steadily increasing percentage of high school graduates who enroll in college, the percentage of 25-34-year-olds who actually earn a baccalaureate degree has hardly budged over the past two decades: It's about one in four. While all high school graduates should have the foundational skills to do credit-bearing college work, a sector that effectively serves only a quarter of our graduates ought not to exert such a heavy influence on the programmatic design of high schools.

I realize that in proposing a revamping of secondary education to have much more program diversity and choice, I may seem to be undercutting my earlier advocacy for rigorous academic content for all students and for an end to the high school as sorting machine. The challenge is to make sure that all programmatic options, whatever their thematic or career focus, require students to do intellectually engaging work, and that it is the students and their families, not the educators, who do the choosing. The goal must be to ensure that all pathways prepare students to make a successful transition to postsecondary education or careers.

The headlines about public schools today often focus on the struggles with unprecedented and frequently inflexible rulemaking. Can we imagine states creating sufficient political space to allow districts and networks of schools to create more diverse pathways to graduation, especially given the growing accountability pressures of NCLB? Even though NCLB's assessment requirements principally focus on grades 3-8, doesn't the whole tenor of the law, with its relentless emphasis on scientifically-based instructional methods, militate against the kind of innovation and experimentation I am advocating for high schools? And won't most states be so focused on putting in place lowest common denominator assessments with politically manageable cut scores in reading and math that they will have little or no energy to deal with assessments in subjects not touched by the law?

In the near term at least, I'm pessimistic about the way in which many (if not most) states will respond to the challenges posed by NCLB. To look past the current moment and outline a vision of where we need to head, it is important to remember that education in the United States is fundamentally a state and local responsibility.

Although I don't mean to minimize the impact of NCLB, the federal government contributes only roughly seven cents on the dollar. From the outset, the standards movement has been state-led and state-based.

Respect State Contexts

During my tenure at Achieve we issued a dozen reports on the reform policies of individual states. Although most of these reports were benchmarking studies of state standards and assessments, several states invited us to take a broad-gauged look at their overall policy framework for implementing standards-based reform. Our most recent report, released in November 2002, looked at three leading standards-based reform states – Maryland, Massachusetts and Texas – for lessons to inform others. I chaired the expert panels we assembled for visits to each of these states in 2001, and what was most striking to my colleagues and me was just how different the reform strategies were in each state, and yet how effective each was in improving the performance of their respective systems.

This underscores the predictable tensions that will arise from attempting to impose an assessment and accountability framework derived largely from one state's experience – Texas – onto 49 very different states. I am a big fan of the Texas reform strategy with its gradual ratcheting up of standards and performance expectations, as a reading of Achieve's report on Texas will attest. However, for states that chose a different path – Massachusetts, for example, with its decision to create challenging standards and assessments right from the outset, or Maryland, with its heavy investment in a performance-based assessment system focused as much on instructional improvement as on accountability – NCLB may push policymakers to make decisions that will undercut or reverse the momentum they have been building.

States need to be treated differentially, and their reform strategies and progress need to be respected. A law that leads Michigan to report 1,500 low-performing schools and Arkansas to report none obviously needs some fine-tuning! If the problem of persistently low-performing schools is going to be addressed seriously by states and districts, the U.S. Department of Education must provide guidance that enables states and districts to concentrate their attention and resources on some number of schools that bears a reasonable relationship to state and district capacity to provide assistance. In most cases, this would be a double-digit number, not several hundred. We need to differentiate between schools needing "continuous improvement" (virtually all) and schools that are genuinely stuck and need radical intervention, which in most jurisdictions is a relative handful. Mislabeling large numbers of schools as "failing" can only erode public confidence and reduce the likelihood that those needing help the most will get it.

If expanded choice is going to be part of the answer, as I believe it must be, then we need to choose our rhetoric carefully. Do we intend to use "choice" as a threat to educators, something bad that happens to them if they don't shape up and start performing, or do we want to help educators and parents understand that a system, especially at the high school level, that maximizes choice, options, and diversity of educational offerings is likely to be best for everyone?

Please don't misunderstand: I applaud the goals of NCLB and believe that the message it sends about expecting all children to be proficient in 12 years is entirely salutary. My concern is with the overly prescriptive and formulaic nature of its accountability provisions, especially the "adequate yearly progress" requirements, and with the spirit in which the Bush Administration began to implement the new law. If there has been a single overriding theme characterizing the standards movement since the governors' landmark Time for Results report in the mid-1980s, it has been the shift from an overemphasis on regulating process to accountability for results. It would be hugely ironic if NCLB were to become a vehicle for reversing this trend and shifting the focus of state reform back to compliance.

Concluding with a Challenge to the 'Feds'

If NCLB is going to be the vehicle its sponsors envisioned – to spur increased attention and resources targeted on the students and schools that most need help, and to encourage states to continue on the reform path they were already on – the Administration will need to cut the saber-rattling and exhibit more confidence in the good faith and commitment of states. If state leaders believe their current reform strategies are beginning to yield results, then they will have to summon the resolve not to be thrown off course by the compliance demands of their seven percent federal partner.

If we can get through this initial period of jostling between reform-minded states and the federal government and focus on the common goals we share, then there is no reason why the high school system I advocate cannot peacefully co-exist with the requirements of NCLB. In fact, if we are really serious about the goal of leaving no child behind, that can only happen if we radically restructure our secondary education system along the lines I have outlined.

One of the many things I have admired about the American Youth Policy Forum over the years has been its insistent optimism, its belief that we can in fact improve the life chances of all young people if we can only summon the political will to act on what we know. It is in that spirit that I offer these remarks.

CHOICES WITHIN A STRONG ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

Gene Bottoms

Robert Schwartz is correct: the major purpose of public education today is to equip all young people with a sufficient foundation of academic knowledge and skills to enable them to function successfully in postsecondary education or a high-performance workplace. My only disagreement is that I would use the word "and" rather than "or." The skills it takes to enter and succeed in postsecondary studies are increasingly similar to the skills it takes to enter and advance in a high-performance workplace. In a follow-up of over 8,000 high school vocational completers in 2000, almost 75 percent were enrolled in further study 18 months after high school graduation.

I also agree that the continued improvement of the American high school depends on our ability to draw upon three strategies – standards and accountability, comprehensive school reform, and quality choice options. In our efforts with *High Schools That Work* (HSTW), we get our best results when state policies advocate an academic core requirement for career-oriented students and when states assess students' performance in a few core academic areas with end-of-course exams. There is also a greater desire by local school leaders in these states to more deeply implement the comprehensive reform design we advocate. Some of the schools in our network that have implemented the design more deeply are 1) choice high schools that teach a challenging academic core along with quality career/technical studies; 2) schools that have linked high-level academics with high-quality worksite learning; and 3) schools that have forged partnerships between high schools and career/technical centers and/or that teach a strong academic core around a specific career focus.

I also agree that we must emphasize literacy and numeracy in high school level assessments. However, I would expand the emphasis to include science. Yes, we need end-of-course exams in a few core academic areas – algebra, geometry, language arts/reading, and science. To be taken seriously, these exams must count for a significant percentage of students' final grades. End-of-course exams are important ingredients of gateway academic courses that teach and hold low-income, minority and career-oriented students to high standards.

We do need some medium-stakes state exams in other areas. For example, I believe that we need to make advancing students' technical literacy an essential purpose of high school career/technical studies. By technical literacy I mean the ability of high school graduates to: 1) read, interpret and comprehend the language of a broad career field; 2) use mathematics to solve the kinds of problems one will encounter, not only in an entry-level job, but also as one advances up the career ladder; and 3) understand major technical concepts that convey to employers that the student has the ability to continue to learn in a given field of study. Medium-stakes exams designed to assess technical literacy can serve to refocus what and how students are taught in high school career studies. Such exams will increase the academic value that students receive from taking such courses.

Students Need More, Not Less, Structure

Yes, at the high school level, we should be able to give students more quality choices. On the other hand, I do not believe there is a growing body of evidence supporting the need for more flexibility at the high school level. Flexibility often means lowering standards for low-income, career-oriented and minority students. In my view, we cannot offer quality choices by lowering the standards for high school graduation. All quality choices at the high school level must be based on a solid academic core that prepares students for both postsecondary education and for the high-performance workplace. Lower expectations are not the answer. Minority, low-income, and

career-oriented students need choices that motivate and engage them to meet high standards. Specifically, they need less flexibility and more structure if we are serious about closing the gap that exists between many of these students and the skills they need to succeed in further study and in high-performance jobs. While *HSTW* continues to see more career students completing higher-level academic courses, we also see more of these students getting the needed extra help to achieve course standards. Extra help improves student achievement if students can get it easily, if it is given by their teacher and if it is designed to help them to pass higher-level courses.

Without some form of external exams, however, choices for low-income, minority and career-oriented students will result in lower standards and will further broaden, rather than narrow, the achievement gaps. Access to the content that is in the more advantaged curriculum is the most powerful experience that poor and minority students can have to enhance their achievement. Any attempt to weaken that moves us in the wrong direction. We now have a very flexible system – the comprehensive high school. It lacks structure, it lacks focus, it lacks meaning for many students, it has too much flexibility and it offers too little assistance to help students succeed at high levels.

I agree that we should have different "instructional pedagogy and organizational structures" through which students can learn a solid academic core. My experiences for the past 15 years lead me to believe that this is much easier to talk about than it is to deliver. It is best achieved when we have common measures and standards on which to measure all students, regardless of how they were taught. This is essential if we are to accomplish the purpose presented – all educational pathways must equip students to make a successful transition to postsecondary education and careers.

Therefore, I do not agree we need political space to lighten up our graduation requirements. We need resources to create quality choices through which students can meet the standards necessary for further study and a high-performance workplace. Minority, low-income and career-oriented students do not need less emphasis on the academic core; they need more. Greater effort is required if we are to make progress in closing the achievement gap.

We must teach in ways that engage students in making the effort necessary to meet higher standards.

Other Issues and Choices

An area not addressed by Schwartz is the transition from middle grades to high school. We need new designs aimed at getting more students ready for high school studies and new schedules and use of time to help some students catch up and make a successful transition from middle grades to high school.

We also need choices that include quality career/technical studies linked to a college-preparatory academic core. Completing a solid academic core and some type of career-oriented concentration is important for many students. This need not be a design in which one finishes the core first and then the career concentration. It can be one that interweaves the academic core with the completion of a career concentration. It is a major mistake to assume that we can wait until students are 20 years old before they begin to pursue a career concentration. States that have pursued this policy now have the highest dropout rates in our nation. Therefore, my vision of future high schools would have students complete a solid academic core and either an academic or a career concentration.

There are a number of quality options that should be considered. First, we have over 1,000 half-day high school vocational centers across the country. One option is to allow those centers to become "choice" full-time technical high schools which teach a college-preparatory core along with redesigned career/technical studies, particularly career/technical studies that emphasize technical literacy. These schools must have a governing and funding structure that ensures high quality. The

charter school concept may offer possibilities for accomplishing this.

We should consider creating more opportunities for study on community college campuses before the end of high school. These opportunities would maximize use of very expensive labs and facilities. Some students might choose to attend community college courses early in high school and get a solid academic core that is integrated with quality career/technical studies.

I remain amazed at how the computer engages many students in learning. We should consider virtual technical high schools. We recently analyzed Web-based, career-oriented courses offered at community colleges in 16 Southern states and found 26 career clusters. One of the problems with comprehensive high schools in terms of career studies is that they offer few choices, many of which do not interest students. Students sometimes take these courses in order to get out of something else. The virtual technical high school is a way to open a whole range of career/technical fields to students in any high school in any community. Linking such courses to solid academic sequences in the local high schools, opportunities for work-site learning, and use of specialized college labs on the weekend are options that need to be considered.

Organizing small learning communities around career themes offers another fruitful possibility. The challenge is to do this with a solid academic core. Career academies provide a way to personalize large high schools. However, these approaches can quickly become resorting tools if not carefully designed. Another choice we need to continue to pursue is quality work-site learning linked to solid school-based studies.

There are two other issues not raised by Schwartz. One, quality teaching, both academic and career/technical, is essential to making sure that more students to achieve at higher levels. Too many low-performing high schools have too few teachers with a depth of knowledge in their teaching field and or who know how to motivate and engage students in challenging assignments. About one-half of career/technical teachers at *HSTW* schools report that they do not have the academic foundation or methods skills to devise integrated learning experiences for students.

Finally, quality high schools will only exist when we have good leaders who can give strong leadership to the core foundation of the school – curriculum, instruction and student achievement.

THE FADING PROMISE OF STANDARDS-BASED REFORM

Warren Simmons

In 1993, I joined the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE) as Director of Equity Initiatives for the New Standards Project. The Project was a fledgling coalition of 17 states and six urban districts that came together under the leadership of NCEE and the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh to develop a performance-based assessment system that would improve instruction and strengthen accountability for student and school outcomes.

I joined the standards movement with some reluctance. While I believed that setting and holding all students and schools accountable for meeting high standards would help end the pernicious and pervasive tracking system in American education, I shared the concerns of equity advocates who feared that greater accountability without greater support would only penalize minority and low-income students clustered disproportionately at the bottom of the achievement gap. Without increased support (e.g., professional development, curricular and school redesign, and enhanced or reallocated funding), the assessment and accountability systems envisioned by the standards movement would only document pre-existing achievement gaps and punish schools and students for low performance fostered by decades of neglect and discrimination.

Ultimately, I decided that the promise of the standards movement outweighed its perils. The movement provided an opportunity to shift the basic principles underlying American education from sorting and selecting students based on their ability to a system grounded in the belief that a high-standards education is a basic civil right for all students. Such a system would be responsible for providing and ensuring that multiple pathways exist for students to pursue a high-standards education. Moreover, I believed that the standards movement opened the doors for the "new" American Society – one comprised of increasing numbers of Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans – to have a voice in deciding what all students should know and be able to do.

A Promising Potential

Many of the policies and initiatives enacted during the early1990s eased my fears. Pioneering states such as Kentucky, Texas, Massachusetts and North Carolina used standards to increase school funding and enhanced professional development as they introduced new assessments and accountability systems. Several urban districts, states and national organizations convened diverse groups of teachers, parents, business representatives and civic leaders to develop standards reflecting the aspirations and needs of cities and states confronting the demands of the knowledge economy and the geographically mobile and culturally varied communities it helped spawn.

The appropriate balance between support and accountability was also expressed by the short-lived commitment to create opportunity-to-learn (OTL) standards – descriptions and examples of the conditions of instruction and schooling required to help all students achieve at high levels, given appropriate effort on their part. My belief in the promise of standards-based reform survived the alarms sounded when national and state policymakers dropped OTL standards from their agenda. Like Robert Schwartz, I maintained that the paradigm shift engendered by standards-based reform (i.e., the belief that all students—irrespective of their race, ethnicity, national origin or economic status—can meet high standards given appropriate effort and support) would make efforts to evade OTL ineffectual.

My optimism was further supported by Michael Rebell's (2002) recent analysis showing a rising percentage of state fiscal equity cases won by plaintiffs since the advent of the standards movement. Rebell argues that the presence of state standards and accountability systems offered plaintiffs and the courts clearer grounds for determining if state funding formulas provide equitable and effective means for educating all students.

I also agree with Schwartz when he argues that the standards movement helped push education to the top of the nation's list of priorities. Recent national polls by the Public Education Network, Public Agenda and the Annenberg Institute reveal that education remains a top priority for the nation even in the midst of economic uncertainty and concerns about terror and war in the Middle East. The fact that presidents, governors, and mayors see education as a central issue for their campaigns and administrations means that the ballot box along with the courts is now a direct lever for education reform at the national, state, and local levels.

The Present Problems

Given these mostly promising changes, I now offer my answer to Schwartz's important question: "What will it take over the next decade to enable the promise of standards-based reform to be realized in changed outcomes for students, especially in those communities that have historically been least well served by our schools?" He posits that continuing progress in standards-based reform (SBR) is threatened by competition among the three dominant approaches to school reform: 1) the standards movement; 2) network-based school reform represented by the Coalition of Essential Schools, Edison Schools, High Schools that Work, America's Choice and Success for All; and 3) market-based approaches exemplified by proponents of vouchers and charter schools.

This taxonomy is fraught with problems. First, many of the groups Schwartz places in one category would also place themselves in another. For instance, the America's Choice, High Schools that Work, and Success for All reform models all incorporate state and local standards in their approaches to curricula and instruction. Rather than competing with state standards, they position themselves as tools that will enable schools to address state and local accountability goals. Hence, there are network-based approaches that embrace standards, as well as ones that resist the standardization imposed by state testing.

Similar divisions exist among the advocates of charter schools and vouchers. Some welcome state standards and assessments as a source of pressure that will weaken the traditional system's "monopoly" of public education, while others worry that SBR strengthens federal control in ways that will stifle local initiative and innovation. In fact, it is difficult these days to distinguish the views and approaches of network-based reformers from those associated with charters.

The main problem with the taxonomy is that it obscures the fact that, as a bipartisan federal policy, SBR has become a unified house in its use of standards and accountability as levers to promote change. The inhabitants of this house, however, have always possessed divergent views about the ways this change should affect public schooling. Under President George H.W. Bush and Education Secretary Lamar Alexander, standards-based reform reflected conservative beliefs that standards and accountability would inform and enable public school choice. During the Clinton era, progressive advocates focused SBR on improving the existing system rather than creating alternatives. In No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the latest incarnation of the standards movement, progressive and conservative strains of SBR seem to coexist uncomfortably. The law provides regulations, tools and resources aimed at the existing system, while also supporting alternatives as a hedge against, if not an outright hope for, the failure of the traditional system.

A Greater Threat

Rather than Schwartz's presumed rivalry among SBR, school networks, and market-based

approaches, the greatest threat to standards-based reform, in my view, comes from two sources:

1. the reduction of standards-based reform to test-driven accountability, and
2. the dearth of attention paid to supports beyond the school needed to take reform to scale, whether managed by the traditional system or an alternative such as a charter district.

Dangerous Reductionism

Early visions of SBR stressed the importance of standards as tools to guide curriculum, instruction and assessment. While test-based accountability systems were always a prominent tool, great care was given to thinking about ways to design and administer standardized tests so that they would not drive curricula and stifle innovation. As a result, the New Standards Project, among other efforts, set out to build assessment systems composed of standardized tests administered by states at benchmark grade levels (3, 8, 10), supplemented by assessments more closely tied to school curricula, such as portfolios, exhibitions and demonstrations. The latter forms of assessments would be aligned with state standards but developed and administered by school districts, school networks, and individual schools.

This early vision recognized the limitations of even the best large-scale performance-based assessments: an inability to measure a sufficient amount of the curriculum in the full variety of ways a student might come to demonstrate mastery. Given this limitation, groups such as the National Research Council's Committee on Title I Testing and Assessment (1999) cautioned against using large-scale assessments as the sole basis for making judgments about schools and students. Despite these limitations and warnings, NCLB expands state accountability testing to grades 3 through 8 and forces states to use the results as the sole basis for making judgments about school districts, individual schools, and the progress of groups of students.

Given this expansion, it is not surprising that tests rather than standards have become the primary lever to inform practice, with all the attendant problems outlined in the past: fears that the curriculum will be narrowed and standardized, that innovation will be stifled, and that invalid judgments will be made about the competence of students and schools. In fact, I strongly urge that we stop labeling the current movement standards-based reform and call it what it is – test-based, accountability-driven reform (TBAD).

Will TBAD succeed? It depends on how one measures success. TBAD will certainly highlight the continued existence of achievement gaps between white students and students of color. The disaggregated-data requirements will also root out failure in schools previously seen as successful because they served some students well. How schools and various publics respond to this information, however, is another matter. An increasing number of "high-performing" schools and affluent communities have challenged the validity of the tests and accountability systems and have attempted to rally support among more disadvantaged communities and low-performing schools. A recent poll by the Annenberg Institute for School Reform (2002), however, indicates strong support for testing and accountability among African Americans and Latinos residing in urban areas.

However, even when doubts about school quality lead to support for greater testing, this support is accompanied by fears that the traditional system or proposed alternatives (vouchers, charters) lack the capacity to produce quality schools at the scale required to meet the demand for quality schooling. In many urban districts, one-quarter to nearly one-half of all schools may be identified as failing. Given the scope of the problem, the school-by-school approach inherent in many network-based designs and charter schools falls far short of providing solutions that will turn around or create new schools in the numbers required to meet the demand created by No Child Left Behind. Similarly, the transfer options and voucher proposals assume the availability,

affordability and accessibility of space in high-performing public or private schools – a premise that will be sorely tested if exercised by a majority of eligible parents in urban systems with a high proportion of failing schools.

Redesigning Districts or Creating Alternative Support Systems

While necessary, reforms focused exclusively on individual school change or creation fail to specify the kinds of supports needed to lead and manage this process simultaneously over a community of schools. It is no surprise, then, that efforts to replicate "successful" models usually produce modest accomplishments (Payne & Kaba; forthcoming). Many of these efforts "explain" their lack of success by singling out school district central offices as barriers to change and innovation. While antiquated human resource systems, curriculum and professional development practices, and labor-management agreements do pose significant barriers, until recently little attention has been paid to how one might redesign existing school districts rather than work around them.

Moreover, as the number of charter and/or network schools expands, the increasing number of failing schools in their midst demonstrates that freedom from dysfunctional districts does not eliminate the need for supports beyond the school. Beyond a strong vision and design, networks or communities of schools also need access to economies of scale for transportation, food services, human resource management and financial services. Schools also require ongoing support for curriculum, professional development and assessment. And some form of oversight across schools is needed to ensure equity for children, youth and communities. Without such oversight, community control and empowerment will fail to address the inequities in social, political and fiscal capital that already exacerbate existing achievement gaps.

Redesigning existing districts or creating new forms of local education support systems is a task overlooked by top-down and bottom-up reforms that seek to change schools but ignore the systems – e.g., school districts, state education agencies, federal programs, and schools of education. These co-construct their failure or success. The Education Commission of the States, the Council of the Great City Schools, and School Communities that Work: The Annenberg Task Force on the Future of Urban Districts have begun the difficult and long-delayed work of developing, testing and analyzing ways to create support systems that will ensure communities of effective schools.

If the current version of standards-based reform fails to consider ways to achieve results at scale through the redesign of existing school districts and/or the creation of alternative local education support systems, it will meet the same fate as Goals 2000. Accountability without capacity building leads to lofty goals that tragically remain beyond the reach of children and youth who deserve better.

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ANOTHER ARGUMENT FOR HIGHER ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

John F. Jennings

As Americans, we always seem to be arguing about whether or not youngsters come out of school properly prepared for an engaging and productive life. In the 1950s, the fear was that Johnny couldn't read. In the 1960s and 1970s, it was that the poor, the disabled and others with social and economic disadvantages were being left behind. In the 1980s, it was that the nation itself was at risk because of the failure of the public schools.

Despite these concerns, the United States has become the world's most powerful country, both economically and militarily. This success is based on the achievements individually and collectively of American citizens–90 percent of whom attended public schools. We must be doing *something* right.

The challenge is to maintain our strengths while addressing our weaknesses. Commonly, foreign experts say that American youngsters exhibit more flexibility and initiative than those in many other countries. But these experts also point to the relatively lower levels of knowledge that American students attain while in school and to the greater disparities in educational achievement among social and ethnic groups of students in the United States compared with many other industrialized countries.

The current debate in the United States centers on weaknesses in overall achievement levels and specific learning gaps. The prevailing consensus is to use standards-based reform to address both the general and the particular problems of student achievement. Many people are concerned, however, that this movement will lead to too much standardization in American schools and not produce students who are flexible and risk-taking.

Robert Schwartz' paper expresses the hope of the standards movement, of which he was a prime mover, but also manifests the fear that this reform will not work in our social setting.

He is certainly correct that education has become a front-burner issue and that the demand is for more results as measured by higher test scores. He is also right that the standards movement, which now epitomizes this push for results, has the potential to raise student achievement and narrow the achievement gaps between different groups of students.

A Different Strategy Is Needed

Where I differ with Schwartz is in the approach to achieving these results. In my view, it is not wise to concentrate on raising student test scores without also focusing on the capabilities of teachers and schools to produce higher academic achievement. Because the United States has a very decentralized system of public education based on local school districts, enormous disparities exist in the resources available to teachers in different schools to help them do their work. Money does not count for everything, but good buildings, adequate textbooks and other basic resources certainly beats the lack of these essentials in creating an atmosphere where teachers feel valued and students are prepared to do well in school.

A most serious problem is the qualifications of the teaching force in different schools. Great disparities exist among schools and school districts on that key factor in educating children. Schools with the highest percentages of low-income students generally have the lowest percentages of teachers who are certified and licensed and have several years of experience in the teaching field. Conversely, schools with the highest percentages of children from wealthier backgrounds have the

highest percentages of teachers who are fully certified and have several years experience.

The deck is stacked in favor of richer kids and against poorer kids, with others somewhere in between. Then, we expect every student to reach high levels of academic achievement. That approach presumes that everything depends on effort and that circumstances don't count.

In carrying out standards-based reform, it is far preferable to make every school building a good building, not only in terms of appearance and safety but also in terms of the qualifications of the teaching staff and other resources available to help students to learn. Students who need extra time and attention should get it. Teachers who need time to prepare to teach more demanding subject matter ought to have that opportunity.

If we only concentrate on "results" without regard to the underlying capabilities to produce higher academic achievement, teachers, especially in the highest poverty schools, will use "drill and kill" and other low-level methods to teach to the test (or what they perceive will be on the test), in order to raise test scores. They will use any legitimate means to avoid their schools being labeled as failing.

We have to do better than that. We should hold all students to higher levels of expectations, but then we must help students reach those levels and help build teachers' capacities to close the gap between students of different backgrounds. Concentrating solely on results will not bring about higher achievement.

I also would take a somewhat different approach than Schwartz on high schools. He argues for assurances that secondary school students have learned enough in reading, writing and math, but beyond that there should be greater flexibility in determining what and how teenagers are taught. In other words, standards-based reform is fine for small kids but not for big ones. I am particularly troubled by what could be perceived as watered-down expectations for older students – that they only need to be able to read, write and do math.

Let me, instead, state what I think is necessary. First, every student ought to learn much more than the "three Rs." An obvious example is that knowledge of science, civics, and history also are important in ensuring that a person will be able to lead a full and productive life.

Second, arguments for flexibility can turn out to reinforce the inequities now existing in American education. For instance, all high schools *can* offer Advanced Placement courses but they are much more likely to be offered in schools where the students are already well prepared and on their way to the better colleges. So, increased flexibility could mean that these students will continue on this path and the remainder of the students will be offered a smorgasbord of less challenging course work in a variety of lesser institutions and settings.

Schwartz is responding to legitimate criticism that the American high school as now organized is turning off many youngsters. However, I fear that implying there is only a core of basic skills which all students must learn and then encouraging diversity in approaches to secondary education will create a new set of problems and, in fact, reinforce some of the current ones.

In my view, it is preferable to set out a much broader set of academic skills and bodies of knowledge and require all students to demonstrate mastery of this content by taking state-administered or approved tests. Then, use flexibility to help students acquire mastery. My disagreement with Schwartz centers on the amount of knowledge and skills that ought to be expected of all students.

For several years now, states have been establishing the levels of knowledge and skill that they expect high school students to attain, and they are starting to require evidence of that attainment before awarding a high school diploma. Eighteen states--enrolling half of all public school pupils--now require their students to pass exit examina-

tions before they can graduate from high school with a regular diploma. Within the next six years, at least 24 states will have mandatory exit exams, affecting about seven out of every 10 public school students and eight out of 10 minority students. This development is documented and analyzed in *State High School Exit Exams: A Baseline Report,* issued in August 2002 by my group, the Center on Education Policy.

Exit exams raise serious questions such as: Are students dropping out of high school because they believe they cannot pass the exams? Are students being adequately prepared for these exams? The Center on Education Policy will analyze these important issues over the next few years and report on its findings.

Meanwhile, I would urge that it is not prudent to give up on broadly based high-stakes assessments, as seems to be implied by Schwartz's recommendations to limit high-stakes tests to the 3 Rs. It may be true that high school education ought to be offered in a variety of settings other than the staid old comprehensive building now attended by many students. Nonetheless, higher expectations must be held for all students, regardless of the setting. Therefore, it makes more sense to me to establish core knowledge and skills first, and then create more relevant approaches to mastering the knowledge and skills.

Schwartz has made enormous contributions to the improvement of American education, and I appreciate that this review of his views allows me to argue for two important points. First, a push for achieving greater results in education must be accompanied by forceful policies to help students and teachers achieve those results. Second, much more needs to be asked of high school students than is currently being demanded. Anyone who knows a foreign exchange student from a developed country has most likely heard how that student's year in an American high school was a lark, with much less expected than in the home country's school. We are asking much less of our young people than they can deliver, and we are not properly preparing them for the world they will face as adults.

The challenge before us is to keep the best attributes of American schools, which produce adults with initiative and flexibility, while raising standards for what we expect from graduates of those schools so that they will know more and be able to do more in a world of ever-increasing challenges.

PART II

NEW PATHWAYS TO CIVIC RENEWAL

Alan Khazei and Michael Brown

American youth need to participate in a new civic institution. Presently, the varied and sincere opportunities to develop civic skills involve only a fraction of young people, even as many of society's challenges – from literacy to housing – go unmet. We need to build the current efforts into a major civic institution that systematically encourages all children and youth to learn what it means to serve others and offers a year or more of service as an essential experience for all young people.

Historians likely will say that the 21st century began on September 11, 2001. In reflecting on that terrible tragedy, the noted social scientist Robert Putnam remarked:

> "In the aftermath of September's tragedy, a window of opportunity has opened for a sort of civic renewal that occurs only once or twice a century. And yet, though the crisis revealed and replenished the wells of solidarity in American communities, those wells so far remain untapped." [1]

Imagine, for a moment, that the "civic renewal" Robert Putnam wrote about really happened.

What would American politics be like if every adult voted? What would the state of public education be if there were a volunteer to tutor any child who needed help? What would the perception of youth be, if our culture anticipated community service even from the very young? How would politics be affected if our public leaders each dedicated a year of their lives to full-time service? Would there be a generation gap if young and elderly Americans served together? What would happen if we invited people of all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, religions, and social and economic backgrounds to work together on common goals?

America would be a very different place, if the compassion and idealism we saw unleashed by September 11th infused every part of our civic life and became the rule rather than the exception. It's almost beyond imagining.

And yet, it's within reach. We have the opportunity as a nation to mobilize our largest untapped resource: its 27 million young people. All of them should be challenged and given the opportunity to serve their country, meet critical needs in their communities, and learn to become engaged citizens for life. Our vision is that one day the most commonly asked question of a young person will be: "Where are you going to do your service year?" It is time for our system of national service to evolve into a civic institution for the new century.

This "civic institution," as we term the effort, aims at something much larger than the current AmeriCorps, which does excellent work. AmeriCorps engages only one of every 625 (0.2%) eligible young people each year.[2] Yet it is larger than all of our national service programs combined. To create the America we envision, citizen service must impact most Americans' lives from kindergarten to retirement. We must come to regard our rights as citizens as inseparable from our responsibilities, that an essential part of being an American is being of service to others.

President George W. Bush supports the ideal of a civic institution for this country. In his Inaugural Address, the President challenged all Americans to be "...citizens, not spectators; citizens, not subjects; responsible citizens, building communities of service and a nation of character." After September 11th, President Bush put forth a bold, measurable, and visionary challenge for every American to commit at least two years, or 4,000 hours over their lifetimes, to the service of neighbors and nation—to build a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility. To do this, we must dramatically increase the number of opportunities offered Americans, especially youth, to serve full-time.

We believe that in order to answer such a large challenge, the nation should set and meet three ambitious goals:

- Make service-learning an integral part of every child's education from kindergarten through college, including a year of national service;
- Create a new "Senior Heroes" program that mobilizes thousands of senior citizens, regardless of their income level, to serve a minimum of 20 hours each week in exchange for a small stipend and education award; and
- Expand AmeriCorps to enroll a critical mass of one million young people annually by 2020, with milestones of enrolling 250,000 people per year by 2010 and 500,000 by 2015.

To create the America we envision, a year of full-time service would be as important a step in a young person's life as high school or college is today. Remember, at the turn of the 20th century, only a few American teenagers attended high school, and even fewer – about 7 percent of 17-year-olds in the country – graduated.[3] As our society came to recognize the importance of educating its citizens, high school evolved into a crucial rite of passage for all young people. National service must become a similar rite of passage, and we must devote the next 20 years to support it at the local, state and national levels.

First, we share our vision for the vast potential of a system of national service brought to scale. Then, we outline a strategy to get there.

The Civics Class of the 21st Century

Full-time national service does two things that transform communities: it meets needs and it makes citizens.

Although America's youth are volunteering in record numbers, they are not becoming what most would consider engaged citizens. Researchers have found that more than half of 15-25-year-olds are completely disengaged from civic life.[4] Harvard University's Institute of Politics found that while 69 percent of college students do volunteer community service, only 27 percent are involved in a government, political, or issues organization.[5] Part of the problem may be that, due to competing priorities in our schools, civics classes are fading from American public education. However, when civics is taught in schools, it tends to emphasize the importance of the rights of citizens rather than their responsibilities. Furthermore, it tends to focus on the positive steps we have taken towards creating a just society, often ignoring the harsh realities of our social problems.[6]

The experience of serving full-time, however, brings those realities into full focus and propels people to act. You can hardly brush away the crisis in our public schools if you tutor students for a year in an overcrowded classroom, where the teacher needs assistance, there are few books, and the children are disengaged. Longitudinal studies of City Year alumni show that 89 percent are likely to volunteer regularly for a nonprofit community organization and 84 percent are likely to lead others in service.[7] Independent Sector recently surveyed over 4,000 adults and found that "the level of youth engagement is a powerful predictor

of several adult behaviors: the propensity to volunteer, the propensity to give, and the amount one gives."[8] Furthermore, the study found that the children of volunteers are more likely to volunteer as they grow older, creating an ongoing family commitment.[9] The evidence definitely makes a direct correlation between serving in a meaningful way and becoming a life-long engaged citizen.

Isn't that what civics is supposed to teach? We propose that a year of full-time national service be the civics class of the 21st century. This would be the time when young people not only learn about the nation's principles of freedom and democracy but also are empowered to act upon those principles and do work that ensures a more just society for all.

As they serve, young people also learn about their own potential. Their service reveals the talents, experience, and knowledge they have to offer to society. Independent Sector's study concluded that "by becoming involved in service, young people gain the sense that they are not powerless and that their contributions can make a real difference. Young people learn that they can improve individual lives, including their own; shape organizational programs; and change policies at the local, state, and national levels."[10]

What Could Young People Do?

By developing future engaged citizens, national service could make a profound impact on America's needs, ranging from hunger to homelessness to illiteracy. Consider what the 300,000 young people who have served in AmeriCorps since its founding have done: tutored 4.4 million children, enrolled one million at-risk youth into after-school programs, built 11,000 homes, assisted 650,000 senior citizens, and engaged 2.5 million other part-time volunteers, thus multiplying their impact even further.

So much is left to do. National service scaled up could:

- Increase Literacy. Today, one out of four 12th graders reads and writes at a rudimentary level.[12] With one million young people enrolled in AmeriCorps, we could provide a tutor for every three classrooms in America and serve a total of 30 million children in a single year. Within a decade, we could effectively help every child to become literate.

- Complete the Civil Rights Movement, uniting Americans from all backgrounds for a common purpose. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s may have ended discrimination under the law, but it still prevails in attitudes and practices in many aspects of society. Changing beliefs only comes when people have the experience of working with others from different backgrounds toward a shared goal. The future of our nation, which will have no majority race/ethnic group by 2050, depends on our ability to embrace America's diversity.[13] Yet, hate crimes in 2002 increased more than 20 percent over the previous year; of the incidents, 45 percent were motivated by racial prejudice, 22 percent were driven by a bias toward an ethnicity/national origin, about 19 percent were motivated by religious intolerance, and more than 14 percent by sexual-orientation bias.[14] Bringing national service to scale could unite Americans from all backgrounds and break down the social barriers that divide us. City Year corps members, for example, are a microcosm of America: African American, Asian, Caucasian, and Hispanic; city and suburb; male and female; some who are working on their GEDs and some who graduated from Ivy League schools. Almost all (91 percent) of City Year corps members report that they developed friendships with people from different races or ethnicities during their service year. All of our corps members serve on teams with shared goals and work through divisive issues together. If this were a common experience of our young people, we would have a different America. We would recognize that in our increasingly interdependent

world, America's diversity is our greatest strength as well as our greatest challenge.

- Provide adequate housing for every American. Why? Because in our affluent nation up to 600,000 Americans are homeless every night. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, nearly 30 million U.S. households face significant housing problems and almost five million households (11 million Americans) face "worst-case housing needs."[15] Habitat for Humanity, which leverages hundreds of AmeriCorps volunteers, has issued a challenge to eliminate substandard housing in America during the 21st century. If the power of national service is unleashed, full-time volunteers can help organizations like Habitat mobilize thousands of volunteers to build houses for all of the Americans who need them.

- Provide afterschool programs for all of our kids. The number of after-school programs available today meets only half the demand among elementary and middle school parents, 28 million of whom work outside their homes.[16] The evidence is conclusive that when there is no safe place to go after school, young people are more likely to be involved in crime, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy. Although after-school programs are widely supported by voters and policymakers, Congress has yet to appropriate the $1.5 billion needed to fund the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (and supporters must fight to maintain current funding). AmeriCorps members partnering with after-school programs could provide the volunteer support needed by Community Learning Centers to double the number of after-school programs, make efficient use of federal funding, and provide safe places for all children to spend their after-school hours.

- Provide all children with safe places to play. A recent study reported that one-third of Americans and half of low-income families say their children lack access to nearby, safe playgrounds.[17] Yet, 90 percent of Americans say "that a playground is an important ingredient to a healthy neighborhood." Partnering with community and other organizations, AmeriCorps programs brought to scale would be able to build playgrounds in every neighborhood in America.

- Double voter participation and civically engage Americans. It is estimated that only 39 percent of eligible adults voted in the 2002 mid-term election, a symptom of Americans' disengagement from our civic institutions.[18] Studies of City Year alumni show that 66 percent are likely to vote in local or national elections, perhaps not what we want but almost twice the rate of their peers. Although AmeriCorps members are prohibited from organizing voter registration drives, their work includes engaging citizens as part-time volunteers by organizing service projects and doing outreach. AmeriCorps members also frequently create opportunities for citizens to learn about candidates and the issues in a non-partisan way by holding debate parties and engaging public leaders. Through all of these outreach efforts, a million AmeriCorps members could engage over 80 million other citizens each year, and after several years.

If America engaged one million young idealists in full-time service every year, the impact we envision could come to pass. Let's release their idealism and see who wins: America's young people or America's problems. We are betting on America's young people.

BUILDING NATIONAL SERVICE TO SCALE

To build national service to scale, we need to simultaneously develop the key programs in which people will serve and the funding infrastructure required to make those programs sustainable. We recommend developing five key programmatic initiatives:

Service-Learning

Even the youngest elementary school children can make a difference in the lives of senior citizens or help plant community gardens and provide food for the homeless. In doing so, children develop a lifetime sense of pride and ownership in their communities. Because of the excellent work of schools, community programs, universities, and such programs as Learn and Serve America, over 13 million students during the 2000-2001 school year were able to participate in service-learning activities. Service-learning combines structured opportunities to serve with academic curriculum that encourages self-reflection, self-discovery, and the development of values, skills, and knowledge.[20] Research shows that involving young people in these activities has a positive impact on their personal development, sense of civic and social responsibility, citizenship skills, academic skills and knowledge, and career aspirations.[21] Furthermore, service-learning has a positive impact on schools and contributes to community renewal.

Our goal should be to engage all public school students to pursue service-learning activities as an essential part of their school curricula by the year 2020. Already, the state of Maryland and several cities, including Philadelphia and Chicago, require their students to participate in service-learning activities.[22] Seven states now permit students to apply community service or service-learning activities toward their high school graduation requirements. Ten states, and the District of Columbia encourage service-learning in classrooms. To promote greater use of service-learning in classrooms across America we should increase federal funding to Learn and Serve America, provide incentives for states to require service-learning in every school district, and leverage AmeriCorps members to help schools implement service-learning programs. The scope and impact of service-learning should be expanded by:

- Providing schools with "Community Service Coaches. Research suggests that adult leadership is crucial in communicating civic principles of tolerance and social justice to children.[23] To ensure the success of nation-wide service-learning curricula, we should use federal and state funds to provide each public school with a full-time "Community Service Coach." They would coordinate each school's service-learning activities and run additional service programs for students, such as after-school and weekend service clubs. AmeriCorps alumni would be likely candidates to serve as community service coaches.

- Challenging high school students to become "Summer Heroes" through a summer service program that provides a scholarship for college. Enrolled in a "Summer Heroes" program, high school students would perform socially valuable, full-time community service for eight weeks during the summer in exchange for a small stipend, plus a $1,000 education award upon completion of 300 hours of service. Program elements would include a combination of service, service-learning, citizenship skills training, and leadership development activities. Summer Heroes would meet community needs, attain skills, knowledge and experience, earn money for postsecondary education, and set a powerful example of civic responsibility.

- Encouraging universities and colleges to continue and expand their tradition of community service. Institutions of higher learning have long been dedicated to instilling an ethic of service. The added value to America of volunteer service among college students was estimated to be over $17.5 billion for the 1999-2000 school year alone.[24] First, we should encourage universities to use federal Work-Study funds for innovative community service programs, such as Jumpstart; in addition to meeting community needs, tapping this resource would allow students to work toward the 300 hours required to earn a $1,000 education award

through the Corporation for National and Community Service. Second, universities should continue to develop on-campus centers that help students shape their service-learning curricula. Third, universities should award admissions preference to young people who have committed a year of their lives to service. Finally, all universities should join the 35 that already match or augment AmeriCorps post-service awards when providing students with financial aid.[25]

Senior Heroes

Senior citizens, just like young people, should be invited to serve. The Senior Corps program has developed many ways for the "Greatest Generation" to become involved in their communities. As a nation, we can devote more resources to engaging them, particularly in service with young people.

The number of seniors will continue to grow. In 2000, 65-year-olds could expect to live, on average, almost another 18 years. We must expand current Senior Service programs, such as Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program. Furthermore, we should create a new program, "Senior Heroes," that engages senior citizens, regardless of their income level, in at least 20 hours of service each week in exchange for a small stipend (to cover the costs of travel and lunch) and a $1,000 education award, which they could choose to give to a young person.

All- Star Service Communities

The idea of enrolling one million AmeriCorps members each year would gain momentum if we could view results produced in a few pilot communities. With "All-Star Service Communities," we could bring together a number of the leading model national service programs, such as Teach for America, Public Allies, Jumpstart, City Year, Habitat for Humanity, conservation corps and others, and provide funding for them to grow to scale.

For example, if Boston were to become an All-Star Service Community, over 2,500 or 10 percent, of its 18- and 19-year-olds would serve full-time, contributing a total of over four million hours of service each year.[26] Imagine what we could be accomplished with organized efforts of that scale? America could put a team of 10-to-20 AmeriCorps members in each of Boston's 131 public schools to tutor or mentor 62,400 public school children, provide vacation camps for all 7,000 children or youth who are home alone during February and April breaks, lead after-school and weekend service clubs for over 4,600 elementary and middle school children, and engage over 200,000 part-time volunteers—almost half the city's population.[27] All-Star Service Communities could serve as a model and inspire the rest of the country to invest resources in bringing national service to scale.

Linking Military and Civilian Service

Even though our nation has responded to terrorism with extraordinary patriotism, generosity, and a willingness to serve, there still exists an unfortunate gap between our military and civilian cultures. This was not always so. Looking back 60 years in America's history, we can admire the courage and marvel at the unity of the Greatest Generation as they engaged in service to their country – whether civilian or military whether the Depression and World War II. Today, we need to grow another Great Generation, one engaged in fighting both our war on terrorism and our wars on hunger, homelessness, AIDS, poverty, and illiteracy here at home. We need to provide many more opportunities for our young people to do both short-term civilian and military service, and we should combine our recruitment efforts, making it clear to young people that both forms of service are crucial to protecting and strengthening our democracy. We should support legislation, such as that introduced by Senators John McCain and Evan Bayh, that would call <u>all</u> young Americans to serve their country either through military or domestic service. Imagine if we created one-stop

service recruitment centers where young people could choose between the Navy or Teach for America, the Army or Public Allies, the newly-created Citizens Corps or the Coast Guard, the Peace Corps or the Marines, City Year or the Air Force. Imagine these centers across the country, in our universities, our schools, our malls, and our civic squares. This scaling up of service would surely meet the challenge to "create a culture of service, citizenship and responsibility."

International Service

America is part of an interconnected, global community for which our children increasingly need to be prepared. Our national service programs should be fortified to play a crucial role in introducing young people to other cultures and countries and in breaking down barriers erected by nationalist and isolationist attitudes. To extend the reach and impact of the USA Freedom Corps, we propose building two new international service programs in the United States: **AmeriCorps Ambassadors** and a new **Global Service Corps**.

An **AmeriCorps Ambassadors** program would facilitate international exchanges by sending AmeriCorps members, perhaps up to 20 percent, to serve internationally—as "ambassadors." AmeriCorps members would serve in other countries and exchange information and insights on the principles and practices of our citizen service. The Peace Corps is an excellent program that has demonstrated the value of having Americans serve overseas. The focus of AmeriCorps Ambassadors would be to emphasize community involvement, identify service needs, communicate techniques to develop the spirit and organization of service, and learn how other cultures translate civic energy into community solutions for common problems. A number of AmeriCorps programs are already poised to take advantage of such an opportunity, including Habitat for Humanity, Vital Voices, Save the Children, City Year, and the American Red Cross.

AmeriCorps programs should also bring young people from other countries to serve with AmeriCorps members in the United States, just as American universities host thousands of international students each year. The AmeriCorps Ambassadors program would be a one-year exchange, during which members' service would be based on the same measurable goals and outcomes as domestic AmeriCorps programs. It would require that AmeriCorps programs become VISA-granting institutions like our universities and that AmeriCorps designate up to 20 percent of its funds for these exchanges, at the discretion of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

We should also establish a **Global Service Corps** to unite young people from different countries to serve around the world. Imagine a corps made up of Afghanis, Americans, Brazilians, British, Chinese, Egyptians, French, Israelis, Koreans, Norwegians, Palestinians, Russians, South Africans, and more, all coming together to re-build Afghanistan, for example, or working to combat the global AIDS crisis. International groups of youth serving side-by side could inspire a sense of global citizenship.

The Infrastructure

If we wish to mobilize one million young people to dedicate themselves to full-time domestic service each year, we need both new programs *and* an enhanced infrastructure and funding system that will spark growth at every level and help service organizations scale up and achieve sustainability.

When President George H. W. Bush established the Commission on National and Community Service and when President Clinton established the Corporation for National and Community Service, they both took an innovative approach to developing our system of national service in America. Instead of creating a single federal national service program, they recognized that service is about citizenship; it should come from the bottom up, and the federal government should:

- act as a catalyst for program development;

- provide resources;
- set and hold programs accountable to high standards;
- promote the work of national service programs; and
- organize all national service programs under a single umbrella.

President George W. Bush went a step further by creating the USA Freedom Corps, which involves both domestic and international service programs. However, to realize the potential of national service, we must develop new, entrepreneurial organizations and assure that established organizations are sustained.

Develop a Marketplace for National Service

We can accomplish this goal by borrowing concepts from the for-profit sector and developing a "marketplace" for national service. Such a marketplace would influence the development of national service organizations by encouraging competition, rewarding results, providing incentives, and building on the social entrepreneurial energy in communities across our nation.

In order to achieve this goal, America will need a flexible funding model for AmeriCorps programs to leverage the strengths of nonprofit organizations at varying degrees of organizational development. Start-up nonprofits, for example, bring essential innovation and energy to the service field. Mid-sized nonprofits, which constitute the majority of the AmeriCorps network, foster best practices. Established, multi-site national nonprofits have proven expertise and networks to efficiently impact communities at scale. The federal government currently provides critically needed funds for national service, but it can do more by instituting specific funding mechanisms to encourage organizational growth at all levels.

We propose creating different federal funding mechanisms for each stage, including planning grants, or venture capital for start-ups; current AmeriCorps funding streams for mid-sized organizations; and challenge grants for established institutions of a national scale.

Venture Capital for Start-Ups

The original AmeriCorps legislation provided for planning grants—similar to venture capital—for start-up national service programs to last up to one year, but these planning grants have never been funded.[28] We fully support a recent recommendation of the Senate Appropriations Committee that this provision be activated with $10 million for the "next generation of National Direct organizations" within the $68 million allocated for innovation, demonstration, and assistance activities.[29] As the Committee's report alludes, some of today's most highly-regarded multi-site national service programs started as small, single site, entrepreneurial ventures.

One aim of AmeriCorps should be to challenge its members and recent college graduates to generate innovative ideas for improving their communities and to become successful social entrepreneurs. Funding the planning grant provision would allow America to invest in the energy and ideas of dynamic young leaders, similar to the way The Echoing Green Foundation supports Echoing Green Fellows. This year, over 1,000 social entrepreneurs applied for 19 Echoing Green Fellowships, evidence of the tremendous demand for opportunities among young social entrepreneurs.[30] The selected Fellows are provided with a $30,000 a year stipend for two years, health and dental insurance, access to Echoing Green's network of 350 social entrepreneurs, and technical assistance for the period of time in which they will work to launch their venture. America could create a similar program on a larger scale, perhaps for 500 USA Freedom Corps Social Entrepreneurs each year. This would cost only $15 million the first year and inject crucial innovation into the field of national service.

Intermediate Funding Streams

Similar to current AmeriCorps state and national structure, grants of varying sizes would be made both directly to national nonprofit organizations and to local nonprofit organizations that demonstrate impact and high quality service. These programs represent the existing national service field, carefully built over the last decade. Of the more than 770 AmeriCorps state and national programs, some are still in intermediate stages of development; some are ready to expand service delivery but lack the financing to manage it; and some have moved into the senior stages and require consistent working capital to continue leveraging their resources and to develop the field. We propose a mid-cap classification be applied to organizations in the intermediate and mezzanine stages—a classification for the majority of national service organizations—to stabilize their operations, expand their impact, and position them for future growth.

Challenge Grants for 'Senior' Programs

"Large-cap funding" is most appropriately assigned to those AmeriCorps organizations that can raise significant non-federal match resources in cash or in-kind donations. This category might also be viewed as the "blue chips" of national service, including National Direct programs with service sites in multiple states. Experienced, effective, and replicable, national nonprofits typically have greater capital resources than single-site programs. They also have the unique capacity to leverage contributions from national corporations and foundations interested in investing in programs operating on such a scale, while distributing resources locally.

Substantial National Direct and State AmeriCorps funding is crucial to these more established AmeriCorps programs, but in addition to this funding, we should make available a specific type of funding that leverages the unique strengths of these mature and stable organizations. The funding should help them build critical capacities, including technology, financial management, recruitment and training. The 1990 National and Community Service Act provides a mechanism for Challenge Grants that has never been funded.[31] As the Senate Appropriations Committee recommended, this provision should be activated with $33 million committed to Challenge Grants for nonprofit organizations to be matched dollar-for-dollar by private sector funds.[32] This would provide much-needed growth opportunities for organizations at senior stages of development, inject significant private sector capital into national service, energize the marketplace, and dramatically grow the field.

Local Resources for National Service

In addition to revising our strategy for federal investment in national service, America should increase the investment made by our communities – including states, cities, even schools and organizations.

States should follow the example set by Minnesota, which matches federal investment in AmeriCorps programs by $2,500 per member. This would create a secure base of revenue that would rapidly accelerate the impact and growth of AmeriCorps programs. Each state's match program could be phased in over four years: $1,000/member in the first year, and subsequently increasing by $500 per member each year. Considering the impact that this match program would make, such an investment would cost relatively little; Massachusetts, for example, has 1,300 AmeriCorps members and thus would invest $1.3 million the first year.

States also could create State Government Challenge Grant Funds for national service. Like the federal Challenge Grants, these funds would match private sector philanthropy dollar-for-dollar and reward those programs with evidence of sustainability.

Next Steps

In addition to devoting the next two decades to building the infrastructure we will need to bring national service to scale, there are several next steps we should take immediately, the most important of which is to reauthorize America's national service programs and put them on a more permanent basis.

Other next steps include:

- The President and the Congress could create a bipartisan Blue Ribbon Commission to launch a "Serve America" campaign and propose ways to take service to scale. This Blue Ribbon Commission would explore and propose a dramatic expansion of national service opportunities for American citizens and, in partnership with the Ad Council, launch a "Serve America" pro bono ad campaign to create a powerful new call to service for our country.

- Invite our President, Cabinet members, members of the U.S. Congress, and all of our public leaders at every level to perform monthly, personal community service. By serving regularly, our leaders could provide powerful role models and inspire others while informing public policy. Imagine, for example, the power of the President serving side-by-side with leaders from the corporate and nonprofit sectors, clergy, and community activists in a public school or in a homeless shelter, followed by detailed public policy discussions on education reform or homelessness. The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development could help construct homes for families in need; the Secretary of Health and Human Services could serve in a hospital or health clinic; and the Secretary of Education could tutor children in our public schools. This day of service for the President and his Cabinet could become an annual event, highlighting service opportunities for Americans in every sector of our society.

- Draw the public's attention to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, our annual American Service Day. In 1994, Congress passed The King Holiday and Service Act, making the observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday a national day of service. To better publicize this annual event, the President and First Lady, all Cabinet Secretaries, all Members of the Congress, the Supreme Court, and all Governors and Mayors should serve and rally millions of citizens to join them.

- The President could host regular White House summits on the state of national and community service. The President also could issue an annual State of Service Report – much as he does an annual State of the Union Address – that details how many Americans have completed their two years of service, the total number of hours citizens have served, and the impact that service has made on our communities and our country.

- The President could convene a White House Summit of the nation's leading philanthropists and challenge them to commit to generous investment in organizations and efforts that facilitate Americans serving. We need to mobilize all sectors of American society, including nonprofit, private, government and philanthropic to invest in building service as a new civic institution.

- Challenge employers to explicitly recognize the value of public service. Employers can lead the way in encouraging young people to make a year of full-time service a rite of passage in their lives by giving preference in hiring to the young people who have served. Furthermore, employers can do as The Timberland Company and many others have done and provide each of their employees with 40 hours of *paid* time-off to do community service. Even federal, state and local gov-

ernments can provide their employees with this option. Massachusetts, for example, provides state employees with a day off each month to mentor children and youth.

- Amend the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow all employees to take up to two weeks unpaid leave each year to serve. Even though many innovative companies and government employers have begun to provide a service benefit to their employees, all Americans should have the option of taking unpaid time off from work to immerse themselves in community service. We suggest Congress consider amending the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow employees to take up to two weeks unpaid leave each year to do service, such as building houses with Habitat for Humanity, assisting in disaster relief efforts with the Red Cross, or tutoring regularly in a neighborhood school.

- Broaden the ways post-service awards can be used. The post-service award should be modified so national service graduates have the choice to use it in a variety of ways. In addition to being used as an educational scholarship, the post-service award should be made available for use as the down payment on a home, to open an IRA and save for retirement.

- Raise the post-service Award from $4,725 to adjust for inflation since 1993, tie it to the rate of inflation, and make it tax-free. The cost of attending an institution of higher education has soared dramatically over the past few years. The Education Award for AmeriCorps participants completing 1,700 hours of service was set in 1993 at $4,725, to be used over a period of not more than seven years. We suggest that the current award be raised to account for inflation since 1993 and that the award hereafter be raised annually at the rate of inflation so that its value holds over the years. Together with relief from taxation, this would make the Award a valuable and compelling incentive for young people to serve and continue their education.

- Bring model national service programs to scale. Lastly, while we work towards creating "All Star Service Communities" and establishing a national service marketplace to bring service organizations to scale, an important step we can take in the short term is focusing philanthropic and government resources on doubling all existing national service programs that work, and then doubling them again. Many proven programs – such as Habitat for Humanity, YouthBuild, Jumpstart, Teach for America, City Year, and others are ready to go to scale and need only the resources to do so.

Service in the Age of Democracy

Historians will look back on our time and call it the age of democracy. In 1989, there were only 69 democracies on the planet. Today, there are 121, and for the first time in human history, a majority of us, across the globe, enjoy the freedoms and rights of democratic nations.

As Americans, we were willing to fight to gain those rights, and we are willing to fight to protect them, but it remains to be seen whether we are willing to serve to sustain them. We have reached the tipping point, but what will make democracy last, what will make it strong enough to survive for millennia to come, is the service of its citizens. Service is the missing link in democracy today. We must come together to serve as a nation and, in partnership with other countries, to demonstrate the power of service beyond national borders. If we take the opportunity before us and commit to building a comprehensive system of national service in America, we will build the kind of civic institution needed for the 21st Century, we will renew our civic life, and we will truly inspire others around the globe.

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Abbie Allanach contributed to the development of this paper.

FIRST: GROW SERVICE-LEARNING

James Kielsmeier

The future of national service envisioned by Alan Khazei and Michael Brown is expansive and full of useful policy recommendations. Their view of national service as a "civic institution" involving K-12 school students, youth, adults and seniors is reflective of the movement's inclusive, developmental edge. This is the "new" national service: national purpose, key federal inputs, with state and local owner/operators. Calling for the establishment of goals in three distinctive national service sectors reinforces this comprehensive vision.

A less progressive vestige of older national service design, however, is the authors' emphasis on full-time service as the 'big league' delivery system for national service. Service-learning is treated more as a 'farm team' for the heavy hitting, full-time national service players. Every national service response to national needs mentioned by the authors, from "end literacy in America" to "provide after-school programs for all of our kids," is offered as a full-time service solution. In the most bountiful of all economic worlds these and a myriad of other social deficiencies would be most efficiently treated by AmeriCorps or VISTA members versus part- time high school students. But the world of across-the-board government deficits likely will not support the cost of enlisting the requisite number of full-time national service members.

Moreover, service-learning practitioners under age 18 and their senior citizen part-time counterparts are producing results worth considering whenever needs are mentioned. In the 1999 Brandeis University study of 1,000 Learn and Serve students who provided service at 17 separate service sites, students gave an average of 60 hours per semester. Of the agencies served, 97 percent reported that they would have paid minimum wage for service received and 99.5 percent rated the overall experience as good or excellent.[32] Unfortunately, part-time service and service-learning benefits, as measured in the Brandeis study, are evaluated less than benefits to the participants themselves.

If we are serious about "service as a strategy" in surmounting the most intractable national and international issues, then all facets of the new national service should be employed. In addition, much more attention should be given to measuring service-learning's impact on the community and on the individual servers.

The National Youth Leadership Council is taking the lead in addressing this reporting deficit through an annual State of Service-Learning Report funded by State Farm Insurance. A format for collecting national and state indicators will be developed and reports issued over the next few years on the level of youth engagement and the impact of that engagement. The first report will be released at the spring of 2003 at the National Service-Learning Conference. A focus on authentic service needs to document the outcomes associated with improved levels of civic engagement as well as academic achievement for the service-learning student.[32]

A Mission for the Post 9/11 World

The Clinton Administration strategy of shaping AmeriCorps around the mission of "Getting Things Done For America" was highly effective in countering images of previously discredited federal youth employment ventures. Missing in the Khazei-Brown consideration of the Future of National Service is the follow-up that would be compelling justification for expansion of national service. Goals of ending illiteracy, completing the Civil Rights Movement, providing adequate housing, supporting children through after-school programs and safe places to play, and doubling voter participation are unquestionably essential to the well-being of the nation. However, this list of

important tasks fails to include adequaltely the needs associated with Robert Putnam's "window of opportunity" for civic renewal inspired by the 9/11 tragedy.

We can look to the Bush Administration for some justification for expanded national service in the wake of 9/11. In "Principles and Reforms for a Citizen Service Act," the President, through the Corporation for National and Community Service, has proposed that full-time National Service members be charged with *generating volunteers*, instead of emphasizing only their direct service.[32] A common example cited is Habitat for Humanity's 600 AmeriCorps members who supervised 241,000 Habitat volunteers last year.[32] The President also calls for making the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (AmeriCorps*NCCC) a model for public safety, public health, and emergency response. These are top needs for the new imperative of homeland security. In similar fashion, the Administration's organizing of the USA Freedom Corps creates an administrative intersect between AmeriCorps and FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Administration's Community Response Teams, other Citizen Corps Homeland Security efforts, including the Medical Reserve Corps.[32]

Americans were mobilized by 9/11 to respond directly to the needs of victims. An overflow of money, blood and volunteers resulted. *Similarly, application of national service resources to the immediate needs of the nation, as identified by national leadership, should be the highest priority of all proponents of national service.* With military resources stretched thin, the civil defense and emergency services often provided by Reserves and National Guard members should be addressed by non-military national service members. But are we ready? Do our legislative priorities reflect investment in the needs of the nation?

AmeriCorps: Leadership for Service

The Administration's focus on AmeriCorps as a leadership program with members helping to recruit and lead volunteers is a large step in the right direction. However, 10-month Americorps assignments preceded by limited training are inadequate for meeting higher-level responsibilities suggested to meet current domestic needs. With proper training and careful selection, many more AmeriCorps members could play leadership roles for emergency services, becoming service-learning coordinators in schools or serving as forest fire crew leaders.

I strongly suggest that a whole new national service leadership track be created, for starting with a service-learning leadership or codet program based in high schools and colleges, operating similar to, and perhaps alongside, JROTC and ROTC. Members would be well prepared in civics values and receive hands-on experience through summer service assignments. Stipends for cadets would be comparable to military counterparts. Graduates would either enroll in higher education or in high-skill AmeriCorps slots.

Investing in Innovation and Growth

Building out national service organizations using sound business and investment principles will encounter few arguments. Ideas advocated by Khazei and Brown are already making inroads in the larger nonprofit world and should be considered by national service organizations. A new classification system for national service programs at different stages is illuminating and suggests a variety of responses on the part of the federal government and other "social investors." For new start up programs led by business savvy social entrepreneurs, a pathway of development is presented similar to those found in business start ups. For more mature programs, a natural progression is outlined.

The next steps should include a plan for rolling out the concepts to a wider audience of practitioners, including the associations supporting state service commissions, service-learning programs, Senior Corps programs, and Conservation Corps. It would be an excellent investment on the part of the Corporation for National and Community Service or a foundation to fund this type of institution-building and leadership development.

Next Steps

- The continuing public education of political decisionmakers is essential and the need ongoing. Bringing decision makers and their staff in direct contact with national service programs – such as is done regularly by AYPF – is among the best approaches. We need to energize our base of political support now to press for expanded federal and public support of citizen service.

- Service-learning, the operative pedagogy of national service, would be bolstered by the proposed 'Paul Wellstone Service-Learning and Civic Education Memorial Act.' This is a slightly revised version of a proposal made by the late Senator, a champion for all forms of national service.

- In our advocacy, special attention should be paid to several improvements suggested by Khazei and Brown. Every effort to increase the pay and benefits to the AmeriCorps members should be considered. I believe the future of national service will be most influenced by doing highest quality service. As a Minnesota community, we are seeing high levels of turnover in staff and impact on retention rate due to the lack of sufficient financial support. For most AmeriCorps programs, the creative financial approach taken by City Year is a long way off. In the meantime, many good programs are threatened.

- The field needs to do a much better job of evaluation and documenting its work. National service remains a largely untold story because we have not been sufficiently creative in engaging community partners in supporting the programs. For example, every AmeriCorps program could approach a local college or university to seek help in marketing, research, and evaluation. NYLC has received the benefit of our higher education resources in a number of areas of academic expertise.

Lastly, for service to become as our authors suggest, "the missing link in democracy today," attention must be given across the board not only to the scope and scale of what we do, but to delivery of what we promise. The tipping point, no matter what the scale, is achieved not by size, but by weight of the elements. Service must always be about substance and quality.

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SERVICE AS A STRATEGY FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Shirley Sagawa

Alan Khazei and Michael Brown have provided a provocative and appealing vision for the future of national service and civic renewal in the 21st century. And if we are able to see even half of their recommendations enacted over the next several decades, we will see a nation richly transformed in civic and community spirit.

In this heady mix of ideas, there are a few I want to highlight and expand upon by looking at them through a somewhat different lens – *the well-being of America's youth.*

Although the 1990s saw some positive developments for youth—a modest reduction in births to teen mothers and a decline in smoking and violence among teens—these problems and others remain at unacceptably high levels. Half a million youth ages 12 to 17 are victims of violent crime each year; one in two high school youth is sexually active – with one in twelve reporting having sex before the age of 13. One in seven 10th graders smokes every day; one in four 12th graders and one in six 8th graders abuses alcohol. One in four high school youth, and one in eight 8th graders use illegal drugs. One in ten young people fails to complete high school; more than 1.4 million older teens are neither in school nor working. Virtually all of these problems are more prevalent among the 11 million youth who live in poverty in America today.

Improving the life chances of these young people will take more than a tax cut and an army of volunteers – it will require key investments in education, health care, and other institutions that support them, their families, and their neighborhoods. These ought to be priorities for every policymaker in America, whether they sit on the local school board or in the White House.

National service has an important, even essential, role to play in any serious effort to invest in young people. With the emphasis placed on civic outcomes by many supporters of national service – which I wholeheartedly support – the role of service in positive youth development is often overlooked. But in fact, whether you look at the Search Institute's list of 40 'developmental assets' or America's Promise's list of 'five promises', the chance to serve figures prominently on each list. Evaluations and research confirm that when young people realize they are able to improve the lives of others, they feel able to control their own lives in a positive way, avoiding risky behaviors, strengthening their community connections, and becoming more engaged in their own education.

The recent report by the National Academy of Sciences' Board on Children, Youth, and Families, *Community Programs To Promote Youth Development*, offers further validation of the value of service for youth development. This report is the culmination of this nonpartisan, highly credentialed committee's two-year study to examine scientific evidence about community interventions and programs designed to promote positive adolescent development. Among its findings: positive youth development is based on about two dozen personal and social "assets" that include connectedness, feeling valued, attachment to pro-social institutions, the ability to navigate in multiple cultural contexts, commitment to civic engagement, good conflict resolution and, planning for the future skills, a sense of personal responsibility, strong moral character, self-esteem, confidence in one's personal efficacy, a commitment to good use of time, and a sense of a larger purpose in life. All of these assets can be developed through high-quality service programs. Other assets – including good health habits, life

and vocational skills, school success, and cultural knowledge can be supported with help from adult volunteers, including AmeriCorps volunteers.

National and community service is an important and cost-effective way to help youth develop the assets they need to succeed. However, this will not be happen without intentionality. As policymakers reconsider the reauthorization of and appropriations for the National and Community Service Act and other youth-related legislation, they should use the findings of the National Academy of Science Committee to inform their work. Some important elements of this strategy would be:

- **Make service-learning the common experience of every American student.**

Service-learning programs through schools and community organizations working in partnership are important for young people to gain the positive "assets" they need to develop into successful adults. In fact, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy includes service-learning on its short list of programs that have been proven effective at reducing teen pregnancy, particularly among younger teens. High quality service-learning tied to the curriculum enlivens the educational process and improves student motivation and achievement.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) estimates that in the 2000-2001 academic year, more than 13 million students were involved in service and service-learning. While we are well on our way to achieving the goal of making service-learning the common experience of American students, much more needs to be done. The National Commission on Service-Learning's recently issued report, "Learning in Deed," offers excellent recommendations to take us the rest of the way.

- **Make better use of out-of-school hours by extending the learning day through service.**

One of the barriers identified by the National Commission on Service-Learning is time; Service-learning projects in the community are hard to fit into the 50-minute blocks for classes that are typical in America's schools. Meanwhile, experts note that as many as 15 million children have no place to go at the end of the school day. These children are more likely to be victims of crime or to participate in risky behaviors. Using out-of-school time for after-school, service-learning programs can both reduce these risks and help young people develop the valuable assets they need.

As Khazei and Brown suggest, AmeriCorps, high school and college students, and adult volunteers are resources that could build the supply and quality of after-school programs. The initiative of Citizen Schools, founded in Boston and spreading across the country, engages community volunteers in organizing after-school "apprenticeship" programs for middle-school students, allowing them to sample careers and gain exposure to caring and supportive adults. Save the Children relies heavily on AmeriCorps members in its "Web of Support" of after-school programs in the poorest rural communities. City Year's Young Heroes program uses corps members to lead younger youth in service-learning activities over 16 Saturdays. Programs like these ought to be in every neighborhood in the nation to ensure that during out-of-school time, children are not only safe, but also building the skills they will need for success.

- **Make a summer of service a rite of passage for every eighth grader.**

The middle school years are pivotal years for young people – a time when young people make choices that will influence the rest of their lives. How they spend their time during this period may set them on a course of active citizenship and engaged learning, or down a path of risky behavior and likelihood of failure.

Although we know how important these years are, we as a nation don't do enough to provide young teens with opportunities that will help them make the right decisions. Government funding for

childcare and after-school programs limits eligibility to children under 13. Most states prohibit children under 16 from paid employment or enrollment in the few summer job training programs still operating after severe buts cuts. Working families are hard-pressed to pay for adult supervision for young teenagers during the summer. As a result, most young people making the difficult transition from middle school to high school have no organized activities, and many are left unsupervised and at risk of engaging in potentially harmful activities.

I believe that every young person should be offered a Summer of Service before high school. This effort could continue through secondary school, as Khazei and Brown propose, but priority should be given to engaging these younger youth at a time experts point to as critical in defining their future selves and life choices.

In the last Congress, Representative Rosa DeLauro proposed to create a national network of summer service corps staffed by AmeriCorps members who would be strong, positive role models for the youth. Involving AmeriCorps members in this way plays to the strength of AmeriCorps, which has in recent years developed an expertise in leveraging additional volunteers. Finally, an AmeriCorps-staffed effort is cost effective and enables the program to benefit both from the large network of community-based AmeriCorps sponsors and the capacity of the program to organize service projects.

Over time, a summer of service before high school could become a right of passage for future generations – enabling young people to enter their teenage years with a positive experience that reinforces their connections to the community, enlivens their education, and strengthens their personal and civic values. At the same time, communities across America might find an important new resource in their own backyards—young people who are ready to serve, if only they are asked.

- **Offer every out-of-school youth a positive transition to adulthood**

A second population of youth with too few opportunities continues to be "The Forgotten Half" of young people who don't graduate from four-year colleges. The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship wrote compellingly about their experiences in 1988. The American Youth Policy Forum, ten years later, found that in many areas, their opportunities had not expanded appreciably. In our current era of international tension and economic uncertainty, opportunities for young people may have shrunk even further.

Service and conservation corps, in particular, offer a good option for many of these young people, particularly those who need to obtain high school credentials. A study by Abt Associates reported that corps benefited both the communities they served and the corps members, particularly African-American males who scored significantly better on measures of personal and social responsibility, experienced more employment and higher earnings, and expanded their educational horizons. Some corps provide education awards through AmeriCorps, which offers these young people money for college or vocational school along with a feeling of connection to a larger, diverse movement. But the nation's 110 youth corps enroll just 24,000 young people – far fewer than could potentially benefit from this form of service.

Consider, too, the 20,000 youth who age out of foster care each year. In many states, young people in the foster care system are forced to leave at age 18, regardless of whether they have in place the kind of supports that most young adults need to help them make the difficult transition to independence. One national survey of former foster youth found that a few years after leaving care, one out of four had been homeless, one out of two lacked a high school diploma, and fewer than half were working. These young people could benefit greatly from the opportunity to spend a year in a youth corps, which would enable them to form

close relationships with a group of peers, develop important skills, earn money for college, and most important, strengthen their own sense of purpose and achievement. An expanded corps network could offer these young people the transitional "home" they need as they leave foster care for adulthood.

While youth service and conservation corps are one of the oldest parts of the national service infrastructure, tracing their roots back to the original Civilian Conservation Corps established by President Roosevelt, many still struggle for funding. A decade ago, youth corps had their own authorized title in the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which doubled the number of youth corps to 100. This title was eliminated in 1993 with the creation of AmeriCorps, which provided some corps with a base of support. (That same year, YouthBuild – a corps-like model that engages youth in building affordable housing for low-income families – began to receive a modest federal appropriation from HUD.) However, many corps have struggled with AmeriCorps's emphasis on enrolling diverse members, retention, and keeping per member costs low (as the extra supports many at-risk youth need do raise the cost). The elimination of AmeriCorps's federal agency programs – which allowed federal agencies to create AmeriCorps programs to achieve the agencies' own missions – dealt a further blow, as corps had participated eagerly in furtherance of several major federal programs. State funding has been the mainstay of many corps, but today, corps in more than a half dozen states are facing drastic budget cuts or outright elimination, further limiting already scarce opportunities for the very youth who need them most.

We need service and conservation corps as an option for many more of the 1.4 million older teens who are out of school and not working. Policymakers should increase YouthBuild funding, target a greater portion of AmeriCorps for corps, revisit whether a separate youth corps authorization is needed, and find other ways to expand access to this attractive program model of service.

- **Create better channels for AmeriCorps alumni to fill positions in shortage professions**

Over the next decade, we can expect shortages of qualified workers in many professions essential to the well-being of youth, from teachers to health care providers to social workers to youth workers. AmeriCorps presents an underutilized strategy to end chronic shortages in these professions, especially in rural and urban high-poverty areas. The authority already exists under current law for professional corps, like Teach for America, to be approved as AmeriCorps programs, thereby providing teachers taking hard-to-fill positions in tough urban and rural schools with an education award and other benefits that supplement their regular salaries. This authority could be used for a wide-range of shortage professions.

Similarly, individuals graduating from AmeriCorps present a largely untapped pool of potential youth workers who have already proven their interest in helping others and gained a year or more of invaluable experience on the job. Too little is done to help members transition *out* of AmeriCorps, even though the law requires that programs offer this support. With sufficient funding, the National AmeriCorps Association, formerly AmeriCorps Alums, could serve as a conduit to the hundreds of thousands of current alumni to encourage them to take on new challenges in the helping professions. The Association's efforts to ask higher education institutions to match the AmeriCorps education award is one useful strategy that ought to be adopted by more institutions. But other efforts are needed if the nation is to make the best use of this valuable resource.

One of the most valuable aspects of national service is its ability to do many things at once – including "getting things done" in communities, enriching the lives of those who serve, and strengthening the ties that bind us together as a nation. Some policymakers have recognized its "Swiss army knife-like" utility and have deployed AmeriCorps and other service programs to respond to specific national priorities; most

notable are the America Reads effort of the Clinton Administration and the Bush Administration's call to improve homeland security. Over the last decade, the role of service-learning and AmeriCorps in encouraging civic participation and mobilizing volunteers has received significant notice. Focusing similar attention on the ways that service can foster positive youth development will pay important future dividends.

Part III

FLIP THE SCRIPT: SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND FULFILLMENT FOR ALL

Dorothy Stoneman

Are we really serious when we say all young people can become self- sufficient? Millions of young people in this country enter adulthood without the knowledge and skills they need. Yet, we know how to create self-sufficiency and fulfillment for almost every young person. We just have not been willing to organize and support opportunities that use this knowledge. Our challenge is to enlist leadership from the top to the bottom that will build our capacity to reach every young person with education and training that ensure no one is left behind.

As a nation, we should aim to build a world in which all people achieve economic self-sufficiency. Through work, they should be able to support themselves and their families with adequate food, shelter, education, and healthcare. Further, we should aim for all people to fulfill their human potential through meaningful work that allows them to express their individual talents and convictions while contributing to the well-being of society as a whole.

Self-sufficiency and fulfillment for all is a radical yet achievable goal for society, consistent with the fundamental ideals of America. What I believe about achieving this goal for the two and a half million disconnected youth who are not prepared for either self-sufficiency or fulfillment is this:

- **We know how to reach, inspire, educate, prepare, and engage disconnected youth.** It is not a mystery. It is an art, and a science. There is a formula that works for most young people, most of the time. It results in what adults call transformation. The young people say that it "flips the script." They mean the story turns out completely different from where it was headed.

- **We know what constitutes a delivery system that creates and implements quality programs.** The formula I will describe creates caring mini-communities in which young people find respect, success, belonging, meaning, and caring.

- **We know the investment needed.** It should be national policy to reach, inspire, educate, prepare, and engage all youth, and that means we must fund programs that work. There is no escape from spending money. For those who say that I will make myself irrelevant by voicing such a view in today's political climate, I respond: "Have you ever seen a climate in which spending on poor youth is a priority?" In the last 15 years nobody has ever said, "This is going to be a great year for low-income youth. This is the year you should call for a great leap forward." As long as our government is deciding that it is acceptable to run up huge national deficits in a variety of ways, America's youth should benefit from those deficits as much as anyone else. So I believe today's climate is as good as any for a great leap forward. In fact, homeland security depends in part on the well-being of America's low-income youth. At the

moment, we are disinvesting, and effective programs for poor youth are closing across the country.

- **We know there needs to be leadership from the top.** From the president, every governor, mayor, and legislative body. I am encouraged by the President's announcement of the White House Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth and await its recommendations and, especially, its funding commitments.

- **We know there also needs to be leadership from the bottom.** Leadership must come from the grassroots and the grasstops, in partnership with young people, generating a constituency and a movement that makes its voice heard everywhere. Thus the need for the "Campaign for Youth," a new effort designed to lift up that voice.

The Formula to Flip the Script

Transformation of the lives of youth occurs when we offer in one package the combination of program elements that disconnected young people need in order to flourish, including all of the following:

1) a way to resume their education toward a high school diploma and college;

2) skills training toward decent-paying, family supporting jobs;

3) an immediate, visible role contributing to the community that gains them respect from family, neighbors and adults generally;

4) stipends or wages to sustain themselves and their children;

5) personal counseling from admired and deeply caring adult role models, some of whom have the same background as the young people, who are committed to their success, who also firmly challenge self-defeating behavior and attitudes;

6) positive peer support with an explicit value system strong enough to compete with the streets;

7) a mini-community to belong to that stands for something they can believe in and in which everyone is committed to everyone else's success;

8) a role in governance, participating in making important decisions regarding staff and policies in their own program;

9) leadership development and civic education that provides a vision of how they can play an important role in the neighborhood and society by changing the conditions that have harmed themselves and the people they love, and that gives them the skills to do so;

10) assistance in managing money and building assets, as in scholarships, and personal budgeting;

11) linkages and placements with colleges and employers; and

12) support after graduation that goes on, sometimes for years, as a member of a supportive community.

In this context, young people can experience a loving and lasting commitment to their personal well-being, they can define new goals and gain the skills to take real steps toward their own goals. The program elements need to be implemented with profound respect for the intelligence and value of the young people as well as for their culture.

Programs that are successful in recruiting and graduating young black men tend to have caring older black men on staff, attract enough young men so they are not in a small minority and can experience the program as one where they belong, and where their culture is honored.

The most successful programs tend to build a mini-community of people committed to each other's success, providing technical skills and per-

sonal supports, opportunities to grow and achieve, sanctions against negative and self-destructive behavior, and a clear path to a productive future, within a positive and explicit set of values. This is what any healthy community does for its members.

Any program that can offer this comprehensive combination will work for most of the young people. Each element is important. When it comes in one package the young people will say, "I was looking for a job or a GED, or a way off the streets, and I found a family. It changed my life." Not a week goes by without some young adult somewhere in America saying to me, "YouthBuild has saved my life. I had nothing and was going nowhere, and now I am a different person with goals and hope and skills. Thank you. I love YouthBuild and all the staff who have cared about me. I want to give back. Tell me what I can do to help." It is this energy and this sentiment that can be multiplied hundreds of thousands of times across the country.

The Delivery Systems

There are seven critical factors that determine the quality of a delivery system. These apply whether the goal is replication of proven designs or implementation of fundamental principles in a variety of new designs:

1) Quality of Local Leadership

Success is dependent on the ability to attract highly skilled and energetic entrepreneurial leadership with vision and commitment. This relates less to the level of pay and more to the vision, mission, level of flexibility, feasibility of success, sense of belonging to something larger that can make a difference, and support offered by funders and system leaders. When talented people believe they can make a difference in a particular context, they will take on the challenge and stick with it and succeed.

2) Manageable Size

The size of the program unit must be small enough to be manageable and to build a safe and personal mini-community. Young people need to know each other and the staff; they need to be known by the staff. A large impersonal context does not foster a substitute value system and a sense that someone finally cares. We have all seen schools and programs which are simply too large, in which the culture of the streets asserts itself as the dominant force internally, regardless of the good intentions of staff.

3) Overall System Leadership

To achieve program quality locally it is essential to have an entity that provides thoughtful leadership to the entire system. This entity provides over-all vision and philosophy, inspiring and continuous staff training, on-site technical assistance and crisis intervention, leadership opportunities that keep local leaders engaged, initiative in maximizing resources and creating opportunities for expanded impact, on-going summaries of principles and innovations, methods for new or struggling local programs to learn directly from successful ones, systems for accountability, and advocacy for the youth and communities being served.

Sometimes this can be done by a government unit, but usually it requires a national non-profit (sometimes called an intermediary, or a support center).

4) Accountability to Standards

The system needs measurable standards regarding recruitment, attendance, retention, academic advancement, civic participation, job and college placement, wages and benefits for jobs attained, and job and college retention. The system should provide incentives for reaching the standards and assistance for doing so. There should <u>not</u> be automatic punishment for failing, such as in performance-based contracts, although persistent failure should have consequences. Standards must be flexible for different circumstances and population groups.

5) Flexibility Instead of Rigid Bureaucracy

While systems and standards are needed, creative leadership needs the flexibility to move quickly and responsively to new opportunities and problems. This implies adequate flexible funding, and only modest paper work.

6) Democratic Input Including That of Youth

To obtain the best ideas and highest level of commitment, the system needs a balance of central coordination and democratic input from local leaders, staff, and youth regarding policies and goals. Input and influence of youth should be equal to that of adults, because they reliably offer an early warning system for practices that are ineffective and problems that need to be addressed. They also have extremely good ideas for solutions.

7) Intelligent Use of Technology

Email, web-based communication, and electronic database management are part of the new management requirements. A reasonable investment in these is essential to simplify management systems for practitioners.

These factors suggest a system characterized by excellent central leadership, efficient government administration, small operational units, focus on supporting effective local leadership within central coordination of standards and accountability and philosophy, and with participation in policy-making by both local leaders and young adults. This is a flexible, de-centralized, rapidly moving set of programs that is not paralyzed by bureaucracy or fear of change, but which multiplies local leadership and keeps focused on the results to be obtained.

As YouthBuild has grown from one program with 60 youth to 200 local programs serving 6,000 youth, I have been delighted at how reliably YouthBuild has been replicated. Twenty years ago experts said, "You can't replicate this; it's too complex; it depends on you." I said, "Not true. It depends on a set of ideas and activities, a philosophy and a comprehensive program; many people can implement this better than I can." That has turned out to be true. There are many YouthBuild programs much stronger than the original one. Knowing that some programs and delivery systems work, what should we do?

KNOWING THAT SOME PROGRAMS AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS WORK, WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

Understand the Current Situation

America's workforce preparation system has steadily lost ground since 1979 in terms of the level of investment, intensity of program services, and the numbers of young people included. In 1979, after steady expansion in the Nixon, Ford, and Carter administrations, the level of investment in the U.S. Department of Labor's adult and youth programs was equivalent to $26 billion today.

The current level of federal investment in employment programs for youth up to the age of 24 through the Department of Labor is $2.73 billion of which $1.4 billion is for Job Corps. If we include all the federal programs--including English as a Second Language (ESL), compensatory education, vocational education, Upward Bound, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Pell grants, Perkins loans, YouthBuild, and other programs--aimed specifically at non-college unemployed youth, through the Departments of Labor, Education, Justice, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, we reach $5.3 billion to serve a population of 10.7 million non-college youth. This averages only $488/youth per year.

Close to 450,000 youth drop out of school each year. According to estimates by the Urban Institute, each high school dropout represents about $175,000 in lost earnings over a lifetime – a total of almost $80 billion for each year's "class" of high school dropouts, or $640 billion for the current crop of 16-24-year-olds eligible for com-

prehensive programs. Furthermore, almost two-thirds of state prison inmates are high school dropouts. America spends $22 billion a year on state prisons.

Thus, the monetary costs to society of not reclaiming and re-integrating high school dropouts into our economy is enormous. The social and spiritual costs are immeasurable.

First Investment: Pick the Low-Hanging Fruit

Young people vote with their feet. They are walking out of the public schools. They are lining up at the doors of youth programs that meet their developmental needs for respect, success, belonging, meaning, and caring. They go where they are sure the adults respect and care about them, where they are safe with their peers, where they are succeeding, where they are learning something valuable, where they see pathways to future success, and where they belong to something they believe in.

Our government should aggressively take to full scale those programs that show evidence of decent outcomes and that are attracting larger numbers of youth than they can now accommodate. My own rule of thumb for decent outcomes is that more than half of those who enroll in the program complete it and are placed in a job or in college.

Variations are acceptable depending on demographics, but adequately funded, comprehensive programs can usually achieve the more-than-half target, even with the most "at-risk" youth, and can sometimes go as high as 70 percent. Sometimes there are variations, such as a program from which a lower percentage graduate but those who do earn wages over $10/hour. Flexibility in judging success is necessary, and steady effort to spread success is critical, rather than automatic penalization for falling below target. Rewards for success are also essential.

We could justifiably consider these comprehensive programs part of the public school system. Because they are educating youth who left the public schools, public funds should be made available to follow dropouts into effective community-based programs.

The first target group we should engage are the 2.4 million low-income youth who are either dropouts or unemployed high school graduates, plus an additional 25 percent who may not be strictly low-income but who live in low-income communities. It is important as a matter of policy not to limit the most attractive opportunities in a community only to those youth who left high school early or whose families are the poorest. This appears to penalize determination and hard work. Adding this additional 25 percent brings the first target group to three million young people.

Then we might assume that in any given year approximately 20 percent of these youth would seek a comprehensive full-time education and training opportunity. This would require 600,000 full-time training and education slots. These opportunities cost an average of $20,000 per person per year, including wages for work performed. These 600,000 slots would cost $12 billion a year.

However, counting all existing programs, there are currently such opportunities for less than 300,000 youth. We should double our capacity to 600,000 within three years, asking all the program networks that offer full-time, comprehensive education, training, and service programs and that have excess demand to prepare for rapid expansion. This is likely to include Service and Conservation Corps, YouthBuild, National Guard ChalleNGe, Job Corps, Youth Opportunity programs, PEPNet Awardees selected by the National Youth Employment Coalition, and similar programs funded under the Workforce Investment Act.

I suggest that eligible programs demonstrate excess demand, a departure from past practice. When a program is meeting the developmental needs of young people, they tell their friends and relatives. When this happens, recruitment disappears as an issue in highly populated areas. The combination of decent outcomes and excess

demand is a reliable indicator of whether a program should be expanded, locally or nationally.

- Steps Toward Achieving this Expansion. Ask each national program network to document how many young people apply at each program and request a plan for expanding to welcome all of them while sustaining a manageable program size and addressing the special needs of some youth for intensive remedial education, mental health services, child care, housing, legal issues and health care.

- Fully fund an expansion and enhancement program for each of these program networks, with funding depending on each network's ability to attract the numbers of young people projected while continuing to sustain decent outcomes.

- Build the training, technical assistance, data management, and monitoring capacity of the nonprofit intermediaries and support centers for these programs. Invite plans for training new directors to lead the expanding number of programs.

- Require all the program models to collect, study, and report their demographics and outcomes on common measures to provide information for on-going improvement.

- Seek additional comprehensive program models that should be expanded and replicated due to their success to date.

- Anticipating the fact that some youth may not be seeking opportunity or may not succeed at first, begin now to identify and invest in pilot programs that are aimed at recruiting the youth who are not knocking on anyone's doors or who tend to drop out even after they knocked and entered. Support those programs succeeding with youth facing the most difficult barriers.

At the same time as the comprehensive programs are being doubled in all agencies, the Department of Labor could expand the current array of part-time, less intensive programs for young people who may not be ready for a full-time program or who may not need one. Estimating another 15 percent might be in this category, or 450,000 youth, at a cost of $5,000 per year, this would cost another $2 billion, primarily through the WIA delivery system.

The above plan implies that in three years we would reach $14 billion per year of investment for these programs. While this sum seems daunting, in fact it is just the first step, plucking the low hanging fruit, building on the successful programs already in existence.

This is what I call the "no-brainer" part: "Open the doors to all the youth who are knocking!"

The Second Step

We are likely to find that about 60 percent of the youth participating would succeed, but that 40 percent would not. We would also find out what percentage of the over-all eligible pool choose to knock on the doors of the programs. Would the 20 percent estimate be on target, or would we find that young people flock to attractive opportunities in much higher percentages when the doors are truly open and visible to them? At the moment we know that some networks have large waiting lists which might simply expand as more opportunities are offered. If more than 20 percent apply, our policy would be to continue the expansion. The goal is to create opportunity for all.

At the same time, we would have to go searching for the missing non-participating youth, and devise solutions for the projected 40 percent who may not thrive in their first attempt. Having anticipated this, we would analyze the impact of the pilot programs reaching for the 40 percent and recommend which ones to expand.

YouthBuild USA undertook such an effort in 2000-2001 under the Department of Labor's welfare-to-work program, in which eligibility requirements were at first so strict that the 10 pilot YouthBuild sites had to truly dig deep into the communities to find participants who met those

requirements. Once that was achieved, and additional counseling supports put in place, those students succeeded as well as the ones who had been knocking on their own initiative.

Leadership from the Top

As a nation, we must commit ourselves to prepare all youth for self-sufficiency and fulfillment through work. We must simultaneously commit to having work available at decent wages, with affordable housing, child care, and health benefits available for those whose wages are low or moderate—the "working poor."

Improvement of the education system is paramount, but we cannot assume that those efforts will result in the schools working for everyone the first time around. A second-chance system must be in place, and it should be partly funded by the public education system. There will always be some who leave high school without a diploma, and there must always be open doors to visible and inviting pathways back to education and jobs, and forward to postsecondary education and careers. There will always be those who lack guidance, make mistakes, or need an extra hand climbing up out of poverty, prison, racism, or social exclusion of one sort or another. We already know how to offer that hand and help people navigate the ladder.

A national system should include some degree of federal, state, and local coordination of goals without being so tightly coordinated that innovation is stifled. The effort must be united in a philosophy of positive youth development based on profound respect for the intelligence and talents of all youth, with clear leadership assigned, close partnerships with the nonprofit and private sectors, and adequate funding for implementation.

The Picture of a Launch

1.) The President of the United States and the Congress take the lead by putting disconnected youth onto the public agenda and by funding to scale all existing, effective federally-funded comprehensive employment preparation programs that include education, service, and civic engagement until there are no waiting lists.

2.) The President of the United States convenes a Council for Disadvantaged Youth. He then charges governors, mayors, employers, and nonprofit leaders with the mission of educating, training, and embracing the out-of-school unemployed young people as a necessary part of strengthening our economy and protecting our security.

3.) Governors and state agencies extend their workforce development policy agenda and their education agenda to include out-of-school youth.

4.) Governors and mayors hold public schools responsible for graduating all students. State and local public schools make average daily attendance (ADA) and charter school funds available to integrated education and job skills alternative schools for youth who are not succeeding in the schools or who are returning from the streets or prison.

5.) State Departments of Correction redirect funds to successful re-entry, including supporting comprehensive programs to which they can send their returning young adults in their final year of incarceration, lowering immediate costs and diminishing recidivism.

6.) Strong mayoral or county executive leadership takes the initiative to marshal resources and community partners, including employers and community colleges, appoints local leadership, and convenes a council of advisors that includes at least one-third youth.

7.) Mayors appoint Special Assistants in charge of producing opportunities and pathways for the disconnected youth who are neither in school, training, jobs, military service, or prison; that is, the youth for whom no system leader is currently responsible.

8.) Private sector employers are recruited and organized as resources for training and as potential employers.

9.) Religious organizations are mobilized to provide mentors for neighborhood youth.

10.) New, alternative learning communities are developed to fill the gaps in existing opportunities.

11.) Exciting certified professional training is made available for counselors, teachers, and youth workers on the front lines.

12.) Data tracking systems are planned and put in place in efficient, coordinated systems.

Leadership from the Bottom: Creating the Conditions for Change

Disconnected youth have never been a public or priority. The proposals above are not likely to happen unless we make them happen. We must build sufficient public and political support to put the fulfillment of America's promise to the "Forgotten Half" squarely on the agenda.

A group has been gathering to mobilize a "Campaign for Youth" that we hope will be irresistible. The National Youth Employment Coalition, National Association of Conservation Corps, National Council of Churches, Source Foundation, and YouthBuild USA have been planning this campaign, with participation from the Forum for Youth Investment, Sar Levitan Policy Group, Center for Law and Social Policy, Youth Law Center, and Children's Defense Fund.

We expect to reach out and build a broad-based constituency of youth and youth advocates, supported by segments of the business, labor, and religious communities inspired and driven by the aspirations of low-income youth who have a vision for their own lives and communities that includes education, employment, and service for all.

The Campaign for Youth will include a major public relations campaign, public forums for candidates for public office, direct and grassroots lobbying, policy papers, an accountability scorecard for Congressional votes affecting youth, and visible public events to create public awareness and political support for a clear policy of opening the doors to all youth.

In Summary

Effective programs for disconnected youth combine education, job training, paid meaningful work, community service, placement in jobs and college, caring adult mentors, a positive peer group, engagement of youth in leadership roles that honor their intelligence, and extended follow-up.

We know such investments prepare all young people for both self-sufficiency and fulfillment and for active engagement in our democracy, contributing to the well-being of the nation and the world. We know how to do it. We have a moral obligation to do it. It will be good for our economy and society and will strengthen all Americans' sense of pride in our country and its young people.

OPPORTUNITIES TO BUILD SUPPORTING STRUCTURES

Karen Hein, M.D.

Responding to Dorothy Stoneman's thoughtful paper, let us begin with the question: Why hasn't the nation embraced models like YouthBuild, with its proven track record of success, and made them available for every young person who would benefit? The answer to this question begins with a consideration of the current state of young people in the nation and highlights current opportunities to influence that state.

A Generation Like No Other

As I wrote this, the United States faced critically important issues of conflict in the Middle East. The actions we took will shape the future of this generation of young people and the next as well. The next generation, now children, will be molded by what they see on TV, hear their parents and neighbor discuss, and experience in their schools and communities. As resources are increasingly directed to defense and homeland security, little will remain in discretionary spending for youth development.

In contrast to the federal budgets of the late 1990s in which domestic discretionary spending increased, budgets for 2004 freeze spending on non-homeland security domestic programs at 2002 levels.[1] Concerns about terrorism suggest that this trend will continue. Similarly, declining state budgets mean cuts in programs for youth, representing between five and 20 percent of their total budgets.[2] Additionally, young people, at least employed part-time or in low-paying jobs, are now unemployed and uninsured in alarming numbers. In 2001, between 24 and 30 percent of young people were uninsured,[3] and 2002 closed out with an unemployment rate of 16.1 percent for 16-19-year-olds, compared to six percent for the general population.[4]

Today, the nation may look at young people and see soldiers. Can we expand that vision to have young people valued in other ways? Whatever happens on the world scene, the consequences for young people in this country will be profound and long-lasting. As I traveled through Central Asia in 1998, I came to know the region as the former Silk Road, rich in history and culture, not as a potential missile base. What a difference it would make if American young people had the opportunity to know Kazakhs or Tajiks or Uzbeks as individuals: making cloth, harvesting cotton, or learning math, rather than as soldiers: fearing reprisals, avoiding landmines, or guarding buildings. Both situations bring young people to a region, but the implications for them are profoundly different.

Opportunities

As challenges at home and abroad play out, public policy for youth is at a crucial point. However, this is also a time of opportunities. Recent White House events and upcoming legislative agenda items offer hope that we can influence national youth policy for the better. In December 2002, the White House announced the creation of a Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, which will involve 11 federal agencies and organizations. This Task Force will recommend ways to coordinate inter-agency efforts to implement best practices for positive youth development. I am concerned, however, that focusing policy on "disadvantaged" youth might center the conversation on deficit models of what is wrong for American youth, rather than on what we can and are already doing right. To take advantage of this moment when at least some federal attention is on youth issues, we should work to shift the focus from asking how we can solve "the problems of youth failure"[5] to an asset-based approach that asks what

programs can offer supports and opportunities to young people and how we can make these programs available to more of them.

Dorothy Stoneman offers the example of one such program in YouthBuild: a successful, replicable model that has grown from one site to 200, attracting considerable attention and resources along the way, but not enough to reach even a small fraction of those who could benefit from participation. Stepping back from the mechanisms of the program to analyze it from a strategic viewpoint offers wonderful insights.

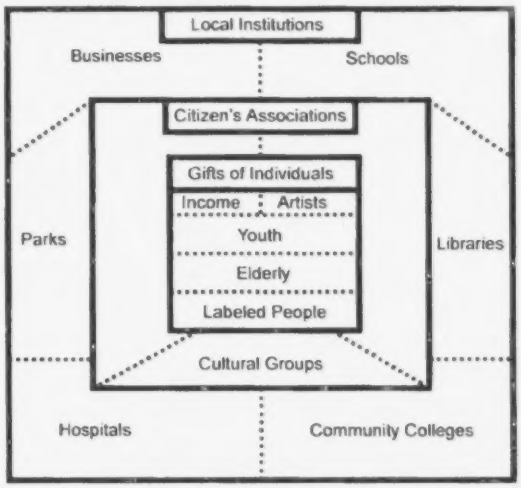
Resonances

The YouthBuild approach considers both the needs and strengths of individuals and their community. This positive youth development focus fosters change in the contexts of youth development. These ideas resonate with the William T. Grant Foundation's mission--to help create a society that values young people and enables them to reach their full potential--and are reflected in our grant-making program. Positive youth development involves the recognition that everyone has something to offer and that this potential may be fully realized through a combination of social supports and opportunities. In assessing the success of YouthBuild, Stoneman underscores a series of the supports and opportunities described in the National Research Council's report, *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development*. These are relevant for all youth, not just those deemed "at risk." Additionally, as Stoneman ably demonstrates, these supports and opportunities for skill acquisition, building social capital, and contributing to the community must come with second, third, and even more chances, because success is not an event but a process.

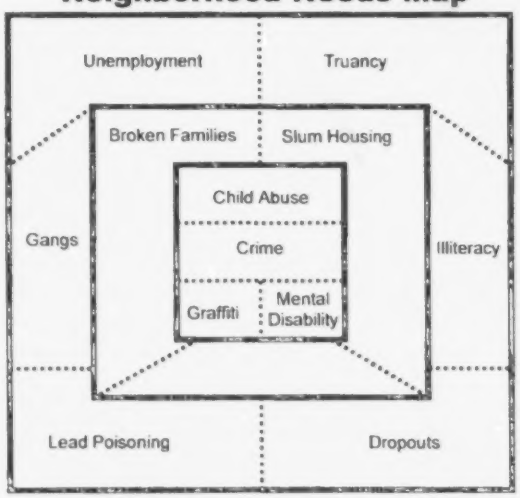
Bringing the practices of positive youth development into our communities is about more than looking at young people with an eye to their assets, rather than their deficits; it is also bringing that same lens to the communities themselves. The YouthBuild model instructs us that while it is useful to examine the needs of a community, such a view may lead to a narrow set of options or actions, or a focus on fixing things that are broken.

The following graphs may help to illuminate the interplay of neighborhood needs and assets and the overlapping contexts for youth development:

Neighborhood Assets Map



Neighborhood Needs Map



Scanning the landscape of youth programs, we realize that even the most successful programs exist within the context of societal factors. Furthermore, finding the answer to the question of how to create positive outcomes involves adjusting all the priorities and systems that affect youth development—even if only tangentially.

The individual young person exists at the confluence of different contexts–family, peers, programs and organizations, to name a few. While these contexts shape the young person, they also influence one another. To change one is, therefore, to change them all. It is our view that the greatest opportunities for this change are through influencing the way young people spend time and, thus, one way to influence their development is through the programs and organizations that shape a young person's environment.

Contexts for Youth Developemnt

The indivual exists and is shaped by the confluence of the areas comprising the "Contexts" for development

The need to influence the total environment has been recognized in the scholarly and practitioner communities, and there are many examples of local efforts from the bottom up. What has been less cohesive are actions from the top down in the form of a coherent national youth development framework or strategy, although there have been some recent noteworthy efforts: the Younger Americans Act (first introduced in 2000), the inter-agency National Youth Summit on Positive Youth Development (June 2002), and the new Bush Administration Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth.

Themes for a Legislative Agenda

In December 2002, the William T. Grant Foundation supported a meeting organized by the Forum for Youth Investment between members of Congressional staff in key committees and offices and researchers and practitioners representing various approaches to positive youth development. Most relevant to the 108th Congress, the following themes were identified:

- The need for an overarching umbrella to protect existing youth-focused programs and to advance a coherent youth agenda.
- The idea that youth development concepts and philosophy, and youth participation in particular, could be the "glue" that could undergird a coherent youth agenda.
- Youth participation will need to be defined broadly; otherwise, it will become a narrow single-issue that siphons off discrete programs.
- Strategies to increase youth participation will run across systems and sectors, necessitating a coordinating body to oversee efforts.
- Pieces of the youth participation agenda must be built into moving legislation in ways that make it easier to put them back together again at the state and local levels.

This is a very ambitious path, calling for cross-agency coordination and federal, state, and local cooperation, but it is a path that must be taken. In announcing the new Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, the federal government acknowledges that a unified policy is crucial to success. We can be encouraged by the President's Task Force creation memorandum, which focused on context: "Many of these young people grow up in economic and social environments that place them at a significant disadvantage." The goals of the Task Force—to "coordinate interagency efforts," to "identify effective practices," to "incorporate positive youth development practices," and to analyze and quantify the impact of programs[6] are congruent with the aims of the positive youth development field.

Our challenge now becomes using the opportunities presented by the Task Force, as well as other federal, state and local agencies, to shift policymakers' view from fixing "the problems of youth failure" among "disadvantaged youth" to creating opportunities for all young people to reach their potential. The first step toward doing

this is to encourage policymakers to work with researchers, practitioners and funders in close partnership and to see us as a resource for identifying and evaluating programs that work for all youth. Next, we should conceive of a high-level coordinating body or cabinet-level position as a permanent feature of the federal government and, ideally, recognize that the need for a unified department for youth is as great as the need for a unified Department of Homeland Security.

Becoming a Resource; The Role of Foundations

At William T. Grant, we have identified one strategy for bringing evidence-based approaches to impending national debates. As a foundation, we are positioned to bring together practitioners and researchers through our grantmaking program and, in the coming years, we will be making greater efforts to connect these grantees to key influential figures. In July 2002, the Foundation launched a Request for Proposals (RFP) to increase our understanding of how to improve supports and opportunities for young people though effective interventions. The RFP centered on three questions concerning youth engagement, organizational interventions, and public systems interventions. It is our goal to fund those proposals that represent the strongest collaborations between research and practice to create a body of evidence relevant to policymaking.

We have identified one topic in which we will particularly escalate our activities: improving the quality of after-school programs. Milestones in the past decade include the Carnegie Council on Youth Development's 1992 report, *A Matter of Time*, which evaluated constructive activities in the non-school hours. The Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Centers project began with $750,000 in 1995 and grew to $850 million with one million young people served by 2001. Due for reauthorization in 2003 at a funding level of $1 billion, this after-school investment is currently of great interest to policymakers, scholars, and youth advocates. Foundations, including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, already have played a major role in this arena. Our grantees, like Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, The After School Corporation, High/Scope, Forum for Youth Investment, and researchers at the University of Illinois, the University of Michigan, Harvard University, and Columbia University Teachers College, help focus on improving the quality of programs, not merely their number. We will look for ways that we might shape the reauthorization debate by working with relevant staff at the Department of Education and authorizing committees, key state and district officers, and national organizations.

Dorothy Stoneman would undoubtedly point out that non-school-hours are one small aspect of youth development. Indeed, we are ever mindful that our current efforts influence only a fragment of contexts for youth development. The William T. Grant Foundation is a modestly-sized foundation with a limited reach, and we must focus if we are to be effective. It is for this reason that we work with other foundations, practitioners, and scholars, so that by leveraging our collective knowledge and experience we might influence national youth policy. We hope that the role of foundations in this era is to increase the common ground for investing in activities that promote positive youth development, by supporting the next generation of scholars who will bridge the worlds of theory and practice.

These times are critical for young people. In this time of economic uncertainty, we should all be more strategically focused with our existing resources. A partnership between policymakers and scholars and practitioners in the youth development field can focus research and funding on replicable programs that work. As a nation, we are at a crossroad. The difference between now and eventful times past is that now we have the experience of YouthBuild and other examples of positive youth development upon which to build.

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MAKING SURE THERE ARE NO CRACKS

Andrew Hahn

I have written about and observed America's workforce development policies and programs for several decades. During this long run I have come to know and admire a small band of national figures who are both well versed in local realities and keen players at the policy level. This leadership group--including the principals in the American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)--possesses many wonderful qualities but one attribute stands out: an enduring passion for the concepts of equity, fairness and justice for America's disadvantaged youth.

Dorothy Stoneman is a champion of this commitment. She begins her essay by making the distinction between the concept of *fulfillment* for the majority through career development and the more narrow policy goal for the poor, *reaching a level of self-sufficiency* (free of government benefits). Her life and her essay remind us of the importance of social values in shaping policy and program responses and not settling for merely instrumental outcomes, such as minimum wage "youth jobs."

In the workforce development system of the future, one can only hope that the concepts of fairness and justice will carry more weight than in the past. Simply put, as a field we have not even come close to finding the key that opens up the hearts of Americans to youth development issues. We don't know how to "frame" our issues to make them more palatable for public support. Our colleagues in the early childhood field are making more strides in learning these "framing" secrets than we in the youth-serving career development field. American Youth Policy Forum and others have a vital role to play in closing this skill gap that marginalizes our workforce and youth development community.

A second contribution that Stoneman makes is to take up the call for targeting in workforce investment policies. This is a complex topic and closely relates to the earlier theme of social justice. Plainly stated, Americans resonate to "universal" policies that suggest "all" children or all youth should be eligible for public-funded opportunities, rather than targeted programs, such as a focus on out-of-school youth. These programs are seen as part of a web of anti-poverty programs that much of the public believes do not work; anyway, when you scratch the surface, don't "those people" have themselves and their crummy families to blame?

My own perspective for the future of targeting is to support YouthBuild, which does attract a highly disadvantaged group of young people. I also support the still largely unknown (and precarious) Youth Opportunity approach funded by the U.S. Department of Labor as highly promising. In a word, the Labor Department adopted a residence or "place" approach to delivering employment/training services, rather than one based on individual or family income. We need more targeted place-or residence-based policies in the future because this is the closest policymakers are likely to come to adopting an American approach to youth workforce development *and* community building for young people with the most to gain.

Status for Second Chances

Another of Dorothy Stoneman's points concerns the need in America for a vital first chance AND second chance career preparation system. The erosion in public funding for a second-chance system for young disadvantaged Americans is nothing less than scandalous, and the argument that schools alone can do this work–without support for community groups and others who work in the non-school hours-is simply wrong-headed. Yet it has been and remains a not so subtle tension in our national policies from the 1960s until now and likely into the future. The fact remains that

Americans think they understand the first chance, school-based system. They are confused about the role of second-chance programs in the non-school and out-of-school hours.

Much of the Stoneman essay describes the ingredients of successful programs, advocacy and mobilization strategies, all building on the remarkable YouthBuild experience from a site in Harlem to an extraordinary national network (Disclosure: I serve as a national board member of YouthBuildUSA). With little space here to respond to these recommendations, I want to focus instead on one research-driven simple idea that has been largely overlooked by America's career development system. The simple idea builds on Brandeis University's experience evaluating the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP). This remarkable pilot program, which yielded astounding results for very poor teens in the post-high school period, owes some of its success to two words: aggressive outreach.[1]

QOP as well as a few other models, such as the Boston approach to fighting youth violence and homicide, the Boys and Girl Clubs of America "approach to gang prevention and intervention," and local programs here and there all utilize staff and volunteers who spread throughout the community, knocking on doors! The approach *starts with a list* of at-risk youth and avoids the idea that they must come to the professionals, rather than professional staff and volunteers coming to them wherever they may be found--playgrounds, church, basketball court, jail or GED program.

While the typical outreach function today varies from program to program--and experimental one-stop youth-oriented career centers are designed to be attractive to young people and to draw them in--what we really need in this nation is a *registry system*. That sounds radical, and I know that civil rights advocates will be concerned about any kind of youth registry. So let's consider describing it as a universal "career preparation/future options education sign-up system" leading to a "future options education" plan (FOE) analogous to Individual Education Plans in special education. Such a plan would mobilize ongoing efforts to help each young person (at least in high-poverty areas) meet his/her goals. It would start with every American 5th grade parent/guardian agreeing to sign a release form that allows a new kind of intermediary community agency in the United States to track, beg, cajole, offer and broker career services for young people slipping out of formal systems of care and service, such as schools. With frequent contact and connection--as if your health insurance company wanted to keep in touch with you--the intermediary through its affiliated network of youth programs would help translate the dreamy future options plans developed in the late middle school years into career-focused realities for each young person.

Why this effort to help all young Americans fulfill their "future options education and career plans?" Right now in America, non-school youth career programs rely mostly on "walk-ins." This means that the programs offer services and the kids– or the kids' families on their behalf--volunteer for those services. This basically describes the pattern of program enrollment in the United States. This phenomenon, along with incentives written into many policies to serve the least needy and the tendency in American youth programming to serve people for very short durations, conspires to leave some of the most disadvantaged youth out of any structured youth and career development programs. These include youth who may not come from families who encourage them to join programs; youth who need longer services; youth who have multiple needs that do not correspond nicely to the more restricted offerings of many programs; and youth who, while on the street or homeless or migrating to a relative or new guardian's home, may in fact, with a helping hand, be re-engaged at some point.

While advocates for youth complain that their programs are over capacity with waiting lists (something that is only partially true; in fact, many programs are often in the embarrassing situation of not being able to attract enough youth to their settings), we have a residual group of youth.

For perhaps 6-12 percent of all youth, there is a need for a different kind of system, a system that is proactive, that goes where the young person goes, that knows the young person's name, and that introduces accountability into the system by not glossing over the most challenging "cases."

Our fragmented first-and second-chance systems in the United States are too porous and offer too many opportunities to slip between the cracks. Compulsory attendance offices are largely ineffectual. Collaboration and coordination strategies have shown only limited success. The message of the new intermediary: "We know who you are. You are not invisible. Wherever you go, whatever you do, we will be there with you and for you, to get you on track with your career fulfillment dreams. If not now, when you are ready. But we will not give up on you!" Several financing schemes come to mind, from a tiny increase in payroll taxes, to embedding the idea in Children Asset Development Accounts which could be supported by new financing schemes, like earmarked taxes dedicated to children's programs.

Youth Policy as a Convener

Another futuristic issue concerns the need for closer working relationships between, on the one hand, the youth development community and, on the other, the career development field. Some states like Missouri, Louisiana, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, California and Minnesota are taking baby steps. Even with huge budget deficits, they are thinking through what a policy at the state level would look like if it were to promote an asset-based youth development paradigm and maximize learning opportunities in the non-school hours. Obviously, this has implications for the somewhat more narrow and traditional career-focused field of youth employment/training. How in policy terms do these fields connect?

Should there be an "omnibus" youth development policy in states or merely the availability of funds--including youth employment/training--spread out among the policy silos to infuse youth development principles into their approaches? In the youth workforce field, like many other specializations, the key groups naturally advocate for their own designated set of public policies. Can we afford this specialization? Might we as a field begin to reach across to allied fields and instead promote learning and achievement in the non-school hours as a kind of organizing theme under which career development would fall? On the targeting front, will youth development ("making the most of out-of-school time") connect to the same extremely disadvantaged youth that we now want workforce programs to serve? These are issues that must be confronted, but my impression is that the youth career field does not have sufficient clout and financial infrastructure to devote to these policy issues, debates and choices.

This is not just an argument for more money. State policy in the youth area in general is a wide open field needing leadership, engagement of objective state and national-oriented policy think-tanks, and frank discussions that have often been avoided in the past through rhetoric and hollow cheerleading sentiments. If we want policymakers to take us seriously in the future, we need to step up to the plate and develop sound policy ideas that make tough choices.

"Thinking outside of the box" is the theme of these AYPF-commissioned papers, one that also has been the hallmark of AYPF's work. Most of our policies today and the programs the policies make possible have their origins in the War on Poverty from the 1960s. This is a fine legacy but one that has perhaps run its course. We need creative thinking that builds on the YouthBuild story, the policy and organizing strategies Stoneman presents in her essay and some of the ideas in this commentary to reach every young person and to create closer ties between the youth career and youth development fields.

SOURCES

[1]QOP is described in the chapter "Extending the Time for Learning" by Andrew Hahn, which can be found in *Disconnected Youth*, editor Douglas Besharov, Child Welfare League Press, Washington, DC (1999).

PART IV

BUILDING ONE SYSTEM FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY

Hilary Pennington

Our universal system of education must broaden to include kindergarten through grade 14. Young people need skills and experiences beyond the current K-12 system in order to function in the economy and in society. The many current initiatives to provide a transition for youth that moves them from high school to jobs and/or further education should be strengthened and supported so that all young people acquire some kind of postsecondary degree or certificate. The ingenuity of local and state leadership is just as important to building this new system as are national policies.

- The United States is built on the promise of opportunity, but what it takes to get ahead in our nation has changed dramatically over the past 20 years. Our education system must change to accommodate new realities: *To thrive in the 21st century economy, all young people will need some education beyond high school.* Making this possible for youth will require building our fragmented secondary, second chance, and postsecondary education components into a *coherent system.* The minimum expectation for youth should be to earn recognized postsecondary credentials that help young people advance in the labor market (e.g., a two-year associate degree or certificate, an apprenticeship, an industry certification). This does not mean that all students will or should go directly from high school to college, nor that preparation for careers is unimportant. Indeed, one of the key attributes of the knowledge economy is that good jobs now require the same skills as does college success.

- *Given America's culture, history and politics, the best way to create such a system would be to redefine our notion of universal public education to include the first two years of postsecondary education and/or career preparation.* This would appeal to middle-class Americans, and it is also the most politically viable way to extend real opportunity to at-risk youth who need the most support. Over the past decade, the nation took promising steps toward postsecondary attainment, including both expansion of federal financial assistance and various other state-level actions. By and large, however, the United States lacks the public will and, hence, the fiscal resources to extend universal public education by an additional two years.

- *The more practical way to accomplish this goal will be to reconfigure the educational delivery system.* This means reducing costs by eliminating the need for remediation; allowing progression based on competence rather than seat-time; developing new institutional forms and arrangements that bridge the gaps among high school, our second-chance system, and college; and holding postsecondary, as well as secondary, institutions accountable for how well they help young people complete a recognized postsecondary credential by age 26.

Making these changes will not be easy, and history does not augur well for success. The most realistic way forward will not be through centralized, federally-driven reforms, but through building on uniquely American assets: organized citi-

zen action and innovation in states and communities—our time-honored laboratories of democracy. The federal government can support this innovation with policy frameworks and financial incentives that expand options while ensuring equity.

Where We Stand

Since the founding of the American Youth Policy Forum in 1993, the United States, unfortunately, has made little progress toward a coherent system for preparing all young people for successful transitions from high school to further education and careers. This is certainly not due to lack of evidence of the need for such a system. Since the seminal call to action, *The Forgotten Half*, was issued in 1988, subsequent reports have echoed its warnings and recommendations.

Why the persistent failure to respond? Perhaps the most basic reason is the lack of public urgency about the needs of older adolescents. Another is America's deep-seated conviction that centralized approaches to education will narrow young people's choices. The failure stems also from one of our great successes as a nation—the creation of a universal secondary school system which successfully reduced the number of individuals 18 years or older who had not completed high school from 96 percent in the early 1900s to 25 percent by the 1960s. During the same period, the United States developed separately-funded programs for employment training and for individuals in need of a "second chance," viewing these as short-term solutions for targeted populations.

Until recently, this approach worked tolerably well. It no longer does. Despite this country's pride in the multiple chances it offers young people, the reality for many youth is "one chance and you're out." The second chance system provides increasingly second-class opportunity because it is unconnected to the postsecondary system in any meaningful way.

The cost is high. While three-fourths of high school graduates now begin college, over half fail to complete a degree, and one-third never even see their sophomore year. These figures do not include the unacceptably large, and growing, number of young people who drop out before graduating from high school: an estimated 5.4 million school-age youth. The consequences appear in near record-high youth unemployment rates and a growing gap in lifetime earnings between high school graduates and those with college degrees. Until the last few decades, young people without an education beyond high school were often able to find family-sustaining work in service industries or manufacturing operations. Today, they face lives of grinding economic struggle, virtually shut out from jobs that will allow them to build assets and support children of their own.

At the very moment when higher levels of skills and credentials are required to ensure a family-supporting income, the fastest growing segment of our population consists of the young people—low-income and minority youth— who have been served least well by our fragmented non-system of youth-serving policies, institutions and programs. Only 18 percent of African Americans and 10 percent of Hispanics complete a four-year college degree by age 29, compared with 34 percent of whites. Upper-income students are seven times more likely than low-income students to earn a bachelor's degree by age 24. If current education attainment levels persist, the majority of our youth will not complete a postsecondary credential—at a huge loss to themselves, our economy, and our democracy.

With the nation's attention diverted to immediate crises (terrorism and international conflict) the climate for addressing these issues today is very different than when AYPF was founded in 1993. Then, the United States was enjoying a period of unprecedented economic growth, and the Clinton administration was advancing a number of important, if piecemeal, initiatives to improve outcomes for youth, including: Goals 2000; service-learning, the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, and the National Skill Standards Board.

On one hand, the country essentially rejected

the federally-driven solutions advanced by the Clinton administration. Efforts to create uniform skill standards and a viable school-to-work system did not win sufficient support from employers, the education community, or parents to withstand attack from those who oppose government intrusion and tax-supported initiatives. Federal support for out-of-school youth continues to decline (In 1998, the federal government appropriated over $50 billion in grants and loans to support youth enrolled in college, but less than $1.7 billion for employment and training programs for out-of-school youth). There has been no serious attempt at any level to bring proven practices and organizations to meaningful scale.

On the other hand, the concerted effort over the past decade to establish higher expectations, standards and accountability for student achievement has begun to yield results. Despite persistent neglect, the youth development field has also made progress. Both in education and youth development, a robust research base and strong consensus have emerged about what practices work best for young people. The standards, accountability and choice movements have created positive ferment and a significant opportunity for broader change.

The question now is whether we can build on this momentum to develop one system that improves educational and economic opportunity for all young people, rather than continuing to add innovative "pilot" programs that fail to be institutionalized on a meaningful scale over time.

A Youth Development and Opportunity System

What would "a system for youth development and opportunity" look like?

My vision would be this: the United States makes a compact with its young people to prepare them for success in today's world. The compact would ensure that all young people complete some recognized postsecondary credential (including apprenticeships and industry certification) by age 26, and it would reduce disparities in educational attainment by race and income for this age cohort by the end of the decade. It would promise that no matter where youth start, or what path they take, they will have choices and supports through their early twenties. Each young person would be entitled to the resources that we invest in those who stay in high school through their senior year, whether or not they actually stay in traditional structures.

Backed by money that would follow them, young people could choose among a variety of educational options of quality. These might include "traditional" and non-traditional high schools, work-related education and employment programs, alternative schools, education that accelerates their advancement into postsecondary education, and virtual and/or technology-based schools. In order to achieve equity as well as to expand the options available to young people, clear and uniform standards would apply to every pathway—mainstream and alternative. Young people would be able to go into or between different alternatives. They would be assured that each would prepare them to meet the standards and that resources to support their progress would be equitable and not lost if they change direction.

The system should be based on a set of principles that derive from research over recent decades about what works both in youth development and education reform:

- **Mass personalization/customization:** small learning communities in which each young person is known well, respected and deeply engaged in their own learning;
- **"Continuous and cumulative" opportunities for development:** formal and informal learning and development opportunities during school, after school and in the summers—a deliberate effort to create what the William T. Grant Foundation calls a "redundancy of opportunities" for each child;
- **High, common standards across different**

learning environments: calibrated to entrance requirements for credit-bearing postsecondary courses of study, under the assumption that meeting this standard will equip young people well for college or careers, and incorporating the "new basic skills"—such as applied problem-solving and communications skills—often developed best in non-school learning environments;

- **Multiple pathways to and through college:** different institutional arrangements, different pedagogical approaches, and different amounts of time to the same end: achievement of a recognized postsecondary credential by age 26;

- **Accelerated progress through high school and the first two years of college,** especially for those least likely to complete a postsecondary credential-the disproportionately poor or minority youth. At a minimum, this means ensuring that the transition happens **better** (fewer youth fall through the cracks and more enter and complete postsecondary education) and helping the progression happen **faster**—so that most young people have completed a first postsecondary credential by age 26.

To achieve this vision, we must move beyond the limitations of traditional institutions and institutional arrangements. Success most likely will require reconfiguring the pipeline to postsecondary education, with the years between 11th grade and the second year of college (grade 14) being the most fertile ground for change. It also will require the growth of what we at Jobs for the Future (JFF) call "blended institutions"—learning environments that cross the traditional boundaries between in-school and out-of-school learning, school and work, and secondary and postsecondary institutions. A key short-term priority should be linking the new learning options developed for disenfranchised youth this past decade more tightly to college so that the second-chance system can begin to function as a bridge to postsecondary success, rather than as an island unto itself.

What Exists to Build Upon?

The current policy environment is not particularly friendly to these kinds of changes. The standards movement has been more successful in exposing the failings of the existing system than providing young people with the multiple supports and opportunities they need to succeed. Yet, there are some openings on which to build. Conceptually, thinkers like Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, and Marc Tucker, president of the National Center on Education and the Economy, have advanced proposals for broadening the choices available to young people after 10th grade.[1]

At the state level, some basis exists for a different approach to the upper division years of secondary school. In many states, students who are on track in school can now achieve high school exit level competence in the 10th grade, the year when most states first administer the assessments that determine high school graduation. There is growing willingness to consider reconfiguring the years between grades 11 and 14, given concern that advanced placement and dual-enrollment courses are the fastest growing part of the last two years of high school, while "developmental" (remedial) education is the fastest growing part of the first two years of college. The senior year of high school is widely acknowledged to be a wasted year.

Many states are looking for alternatives that improve results for low-performing students. Wisconsin and Minnesota, for example, allow state money to follow vulnerable youth to appropriate programs. Their "children at-risk" statutes enable public school districts to contract with private, nonprofit, nonsectarian agencies to educate children who meet the statute's criteria for "at risk." Enacted in the mid-1980s, these statutes create a more stable funding stream for private, nonprofit agencies or community-based alternative schools. Districts with large numbers of dropouts and youth who meet the statute's criteria for "at risk" are

required to let students choose alternative education environments. Contracted providers are considered Milwaukee Public Schools "partnership schools" and receive per-pupil funding at 80 percent of the average per-pupil expenditure. In Milwaukee today, alternative education programs are responsible for 20 percent of the high school graduates. Similarly, about 30 community-based alternative schools operating within the Minneapolis Public Schools system under this legislation are reported to be responsible for 20 percent of high school graduates.

At the community level, particularly in urban areas, there are some promising attempts to link in-school and out-of-school resources and supports for older adolescents. In Chicago, civic and community leaders created After School Matters, an initiative to scale up out-of-school learning opportunities for older youth that aims to reach more than half of Chicago's teenagers by 2005, offering them supports and opportunities in the out-of-school hours. To deliver this programming, clusters of schools, parks, and libraries are linked together to form neighborhood "campuses" throughout the city. Currently, 18 clusters (up from six in 2000) are home to the four After-School Matters programs that focus on the arts (visual and performing), sports (playing and coaching), technology (web design and robotics), and literacy (through storytelling). Each of these programs contains an element of paid employment, apprenticeship with skilled adults, opportunities to teach others, and intentional skill building.

At the institutional level, a robust number of impressive learning options and "blended institutions," have developed over the past decade, including:

- *High schools run by community-based organizations,* such as YouthBuild or El Puente in Milwaukee that extend the school day by involving youth in community-development activities;
- *"Flex" schools,* such as Horizonte in Salt Lake City, which serves high school students, young parents, adults, and ESL students on a school schedule that runs 12 months a year, day and evening, with open entry and exit, advisory groups, and structured group activities to help students learn decision-making and teamwork skills;
- *Innovative new schools* such as The Met in Rhode Island, a school without walls in which students pursue their interests through internships and self-paced research projects under the supervision of teacher/coaches; and,
- *Virtual schools* such as Florida Virtual School (FVS), an on-line high school serving high schools in all of Florida's school districts as well as students who are home-schooled. Students can enroll in FVS full-time, or they can take classes in a traditional school for half the day and the remaining classes at FVS.

Equally promising for the vision proposed here are schools that provide postsecondary success for the youth least likely to achieve it. For example, Portland Community College (PCC) enrolls over 2,000 high school-age students, making it the largest high school in Portland. PCC Prep's College Bound program has multiple entry points that allow students with as low as third-grade-level reading and math skills to enroll in non-credit and developmental education courses that link directly to credit-based career education programs. Eighty percent of the out-of-school youth who enter PCC's high school completion program continue their education in the program, earn a diploma or a GED, return to a high school program, or obtain employment while simultaneously gaining college credits. As a dropout recovery and prevention program, the alternative pathway at Portland Community College receives public school average daily attendance (ADA) money for its students. As students move into college coursework, they also become eligible for federal Pell grants.

The over 30 Middle Colleges around the coun-

try are another example. These small high schools on community college campuses target low-performing youth and offer, among other things, a combination of rigorous course work, extensive supports and personalization, and internships in the community.[2]

There are also strategies that accelerate young people's progression from high school into high paying career jobs by blending school and work. Youth apprenticeships and programs like the Cisco Networking Academy and YouthBuild are among the best known examples. Others, such as Year-Up in Boston, essentially add a fifth year to high school, using the extra time to give students intensive training in information technology coupled with internships at high-tech firms. Graduates move on to career jobs that offer good pay and possibilities for further education.

What Will It Take to Get From Here to There?

Many barriers remain if the goal is to move from a smorgasbord of options to a coherent system of multiple pathways to postsecondary credentials at the scale needed. The biggest barrier is the lack of public will to tackle these issues with the urgency and creativity they deserve. The existing system works well enough for a substantial number of families, a major reason why the general public does not yet understand the implications of the coming shortage of skilled workers to replace the large numbers who will retire. Other barriers include public policies that make it difficult for credits, financial resources, and faculty to bridge secondary, second-chance, and postsecondary institutions; and a deep-seated resistance to challenging the status quo among large urban school districts and teachers' unions.

To accelerate the movement toward one system for youth development and opportunity that provides all youth the opportunity to complete a two-year postsecondary credential by the time they reach their mid-twenties:[2]

- **Make lost youth visible and hold institutions accountable for their success:**

This would require redefining accountability measures (at both the secondary and postsecondary levels) so that they count every child, including those who drop out or stop out of the system. Existing accountability measures at the state and federal levels would be supplemented with information on how students fare in their transitions to work and further education. Linked data systems would track the progress of every participant through each and every provider/education institution. They would record how many students went from a secondary setting—traditional or alternative—directly to college, how many need remediation, how many complete a postsecondary credential, and how many graduates are employed at what wages. Many states have the technical ability to collect longitudinal data on students through tracking student records and unemployment insurance records, but only a handful (e.g., Florida, Texas, Illinois) have actually begun to do so.

This recommendation would also tie institutional funding, particularly at the postsecondary level, to an institution's success in helping students complete postsecondary credentials. It would create incentives for collaboration between secondary, second-chance and postsecondary institutions and penalties for postsecondary institutions that fail to improve postsecondary completion rates for young adults.

- **Adopt the principle that public money can follow the learner**

States could phase in such a change, starting with older adolescents (grades 11 on) or with at-risk youth trapped in persistently low-performing schools. Several concepts have been proposed, including the college tuitionships advocated by Graham Toft of the Hudson Institute ("Youth Tuitionships," 2002), as well as the idea of Job Opportunity Grants and Loans for all out-of-school 16-24-year-olds. Under this proposal, young people who leave high school early would

be eligible for up to two years of funding at a level equivalent to their school district's average daily allowance or the maximum Pell grant. In addition, they could borrow up to $25,000 a year for up to three years; repayable through a surcharge on future earned income. Expanding Individual Development Accounts for this purpose would allow young adults to share responsibility for some portion of the cost of their postsecondary education.

Changes in school governance should accompany shifts toward a more flexible financing system. For example, Paul Hill proposes several new models for governance of school districts that would advance a multiple pathways and blended institutions agenda. One model urges experimentation with "community partnerships" which would make the entire educational resources of the community available to its young: internships, service-learning opportunities, museums, community-based organizations. A Community Education Board, rather than a school board, would be responsible for mobilizing all of a community's resources—in schools, community organizations, workplaces, the faith community, postsecondary institutions, etc.—on behalf of its youth. The second calls for a superintendent and school board to create a diverse system of public schools through contracts—the "diverse providers" model. These could include arts organizations, community organizations, other nonprofits, and other blended institutions.

- **Expand the supply of alternatives through a large public/private Innovation Fund to seed and scale new "schools"/learning environments,** as well as new and effective forms of professional development for educators and youth development professionals. The fund should encourage the creation of new blended institutions, as well as large-scale expansion of what works. Federal money could be leveraged along the lines of the Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Project (Obey-Porter), which subsidizes states and districts to adopt models that demonstrate research-based effectiveness. Such a fund could be incorporated into the reauthorization of the Carl Perkins Act or another federal legislative vehicle.

- **Build public will**

At the federal level, appoint a national or congressional commission to develop strategies for a 21st Century Education System based on a set of unifying principles for all programs that serve youth. These principals should include common, high standards and a commitment to building multiple pathways that allow young people to take different routes to the same end goal. Indeed, it seems counterproductive to continue the separate reauthorizations of ESEA, Perkins, Higher Education Act, and Workforce Investment Act without asking the larger question of whether the structure we have for preparing young people for adult life is really the structure we need, given the importance to our national economy of a strong, seamless learning system. These questions should influence the 2003-2004 reauthorization deliberations on Perkins, the Higher Education Act, and the Workforce Investment Act, even if implementation of any changes takes much longer.

Another strategy: Build a new civil rights movement around the right to a quality education through two years of college. This could and should become the major civil rights issue, and it could generate a substantial political constituency behind it. Building such a movement will require sustained political organizing and the creation of political coalitions with voting power. Several national foundations, including the Mott Foundation, are supporting the education reform efforts of such community organizing groups as ACORN and the Austin Interfaith Alliance. These efforts should be expanded. Youth themselves can also be a powerful force. Imagine the impact of the dropouts in major cities appearing at their local schools on a common day—seeking re-enrollment as a way of demonstrating how large their numbers are, an idea advocated by Dorothy Stoneman of YouthBuild and Ed DeJesus of the Youth Development and Research Fund.

Is There Sufficient Demand for Such Changes to Take Hold?

To date, the United States has been unable to build the political constituency to support the kinds of broad-based changes advocated here. Is there any reason to believe that things can be different? While history does not augur well, some promising trends may create the cross-cutting coalitions of interest that could achieve real change over the next decade:

- *The accountability movement* has exposed the poor performance of many schools. A significant source of leverage may well be the No Child Left Behind Act and its provisions for options for students in schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress. The American people resonate strongly with the goal of leaving no child behind. Much depends on how effective youth advocates are in using this legislation to achieve adequate supports and opportunities for under-served youth.

- *Demographics:* By 2050, the United States will be "majority minority." With some education beyond high school now the ticket to family-supporting jobs, a quality education through two years of postsecondary education could be considered a right of every young person and the responsibility of society. This argument would have a strong political constituency.

- *The cost and waste of the current system:* While the public may believe that education beyond high school is necessary for success, the country presently lacks the resources needed to finance a large-scale expansion of its "traditional" postsecondary system. Alternatives with proven success could be more cost effective. In addition, state legislatures increasingly are interested in the return on their investments in higher education, given the poor completion rates. Together, these forces may accelerate demand to reconfigure the existing system so that more youth can access and succeed in postsecondary education.

- *Business/Economic:* Both states and employers share a vested interest in increasing the supply of skilled workers. Despite the current economic downturn, employers face shortages of skilled labor over the next several decades. The Aspen Institute's recent report, *Grow Faster Together or Grow Slowly Apart,* warns that the dramatic growth of the native-born workforce (44 percent over the past 20 years) is over. The next decade will see zero growth in the native-born workforce. In addition, just as the need for an educated workforce grows, the increase in the share of workers with post high-school education (19 percent over the last 20 years) will slow to only an increase of four percent over the next 20 years.

Similarly, states will increasingly compete on the postsecondary attainment of their workforce as a key dimension of economic competitiveness and comparative advantage. As a result, they are looking for creative ways to improve college completion rates. For example, Georgia and Maryland are redefining their education policies to encourage every student to complete 14 years of school. Utah's New Century scholarship program offers a 75 percent scholarship to a four-year state college or university to students who graduate from high school with an associate degree.

- *Consumer demand:* As discussed earlier, the past decade has seen explosive growth in diverse learning options for young people, including new schools, vouchers, charter laws, home schooling, distance learning at the secondary and postsecondary levels, and dual enrollment options which blur the lines between secondary and postsecondary institutions. In addition, the ways in which students themselves move across and between the institutions of work and learning differ dramatically from the linear two- to four-year progression that the systems originally assumed. Students are dropping into and out of educa-

tion at the secondary and postsecondary levels at increasing rates; many combine work and schooling in their young adult years. Our educational institutions and policies have yet to catch up with these trends in human behavior.

Conclusion

It is important to recognize that much of the income and opportunity gap in America has to do with things that education alone cannot fix, such as the quality of jobs and wages and segregated housing that often determines access to quality education. But advocates for youth, with organizations like AYPF to inform and inspire them, must keep their eyes on the prize: the transformative potential that a common system for youth development and opportunity could have for individual young people and for the society as a whole. Let me close with two examples that demonstrate this point.

First is the story of Damari Roman, who was born in Puerto Rico and came to Boston with her family when she was eight years old. She learned English quickly, did well in elementary and middle school, but hit hard times in high school. She failed tenth grade, dropped out, enrolled in an alternative school, was expelled twice, and then moved to New Jersey, where she entered and dropped out of another high school and began working to support herself. Three years later and back in Boston, Damari now wanted a GED, but she learned about something better: Diploma Plus—a program that let her combine high school courses, an internship, and the chance to take college courses. Her internship, in a physical therapy office, extended into a part-time job and she earned As in two college classes at Bunker Hill Community College. High school diploma in hand, Damari is now a physical therapy assistant *and* in her first year of a college-degree program in physical therapy. Damari is one of the lucky ones. Despite enormous obstacles, she successfully negotiated "the non-system."

Contrast Damari's story of a single, persevering and exceptional person with the experience of thousands of students in New York City who are engaged in the College Now Program, a partnership between the public schools and the City University of New York (CUNY) that now risks budget cuts due to the city's fiscal crisis. The CUNY system gives its placement exams for credit-bearing courses to 11th graders in schools participating in the program. Students who pass those exams can immediately enter a dual-enrollment program and start to take credit-bearing courses in any CUNY institution. As a result, they leave high school much further along, reducing the time and money they will spend on a postsecondary degree. Students who fail the exams know this at the beginning of 11th grade and can immediately start taking developmental, or remedial, education courses—not just in their high schools, but also at the college level through the CUNY system. All 17 CUNY campuses and all 161 high schools in the city are participating in College Now, which reaches 13,000 students. Most, or 10,000, are registered for dual-credit courses. In addition, New York City is deliberately fostering new forms of the high school, such as the New Vision schools and middle colleges like LaGuardia, Bard Early College high school, and others. In New York City the system is making connections between high school and postsecondary education on behalf of students and creating a range of high-quality learning environments in which young people can excel.

As the need for an educated workforce grows, the United States cannot maintain its economic competitiveness or succeed as a democracy without a more coherent system for helping all its young people develop their potential as citizens and productive workers. Today's young people will be this country's leaders during one of the most challenging times in our history. We cannot afford to lose this generation while we fix the schools for those coming behind them. For their sake and our own, we must redouble our efforts to create a **system of multiple pathways and accelerated advancement** that meets the challenges of the 21st century.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Botstein (*Jefferson's Children*,1997) argues for ending high school at age 16 and allowing youth a broad range of choices among postsecondary education, work, the military, and community service. Tucker ("High School and Beyond," 2002) argues for a reconfiguration of the education system, from lower secondary (the first 10 years of schooling) to upper secondary (one to three years of intensive technical study or academic study through International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, or advance project-based learning) to higher education, which would be more like postgraduate professional education--thus improving outcomes and shaving the costs of one to three years off the current system. Rigorous gateway examinations would govern students' passage from one part of the system to the next.

[2]The Gates, Carnegie, Ford, and Kellogg Foundations are building on these innovations through their initiative to create Early College High Schools—small high schools from which students will leave with a diploma, a two-year Associate of Arts (AA) degree or sufficient college credits to enter a four-year liberal arts program as a sophomore or junior. At such schools, there is no transition between high school and college. Students can earn the Associate's degree within the same small institution in which they do high school work.

PUTTING THE WILL BEHIND THE VISION

Wendy Puriefoy

The World Bank headquarters in the District of Columbia features a large banner with the following statement about the importance of education. So true and so eloquent, it bears repeating:

"Education is a powerful instrument for reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and social well-being, and laying the basis for sustained economic growth. It is essential for building democratic societies and dynamic, globally competitive economies."

In other words, education is the basis of a civilized society. My response to Hilary Pennington begins with those words in mind. I thank her for her vision of a coherent K-14 education/work system and wish to re-emphasize important features in that vision:

- The current fragmented system of youth services from education to employment is unworkable for our children, for their communities, and for the nation.
- Standards-based reform has created new opportunities and new pressures to make the system more coherent and more humane.
- Extending our support of youth until age 26 is realistic because experience tells us that many children's lives do not begin to stabilize until then.
- Changes in the higher education system are a must and one of the greatest obstacles we face.
- A coherent system would provide youth with multiple choices from work to further education while simultaneously engaging and expanding youth's intellectual capacities.

So why don't we have what Pennington proposes? The biggest challenge facing the nation for her proposed system to become a reality: public knowledge of the need for the proposed system and public will and stamina to take the necessary steps to achieve it.

The public is not mobilized around this issue of a comprehensive education system. Why? Is there nothing more important than the education of our children? Well, there's the economy, terrorism, war, social security, health care, and numerous other distractions. And, besides one only needs to review national poll results from the last decade to know that the American public truly believes in what Pennington proposes. Yet, most of us know that there is a widening gap between what the public believes, what it knows and, therefore, what it is willing to act on.

A recent book, *The American Dream and Public Education* by Jennifer Hochschild, explores the dilemma that America's belief system—its ideology—poses as we seek to match Americans beliefs with the reality of the poor education too many children in this country actually receive. America's ideology of equality is powerful and guides our surface thinking about every issue. Here's the ideology as it relates to public education. It is the story our Founding Fathers developed to guide the nation to freedom. It goes something like this: Public education is the lifeblood of a democratic society. It is of no use to live in a free society if you do not know how to use and preserve your freedom and freedom for future generations. Public schools—especially—hold a special responsibility in preparing people and communities to live in freedom.

In fact, we could say that our public schools bear a greater burden than any other public insti-

tution of overseeing, managing, and balancing the "freedom" challenge embedded in the nation's abacus of intent to provide a good education for every child that will accrue to benefit both the individual and our society.

However, America's ideology and its education policies are often at odds. In fact, if you take seriously America's ideology, then Americans have made irrational policy choices when it comes to public education. Think about America's actions around the following education problems – inequitable funding for public schools across communities and states; lack of funding at the state and federal levels for standards-based reform; all children not receiving access to early childhood programs; the intolerable achievement gap between white and minority students; the challenges to Title IX; and school desegregation, to name a few.

It's Not the Ideology That's the Problem

There is nothing wrong with America's ideology. There is something seriously amiss with our policymaking. We have a great deal of work to do to close the gap between our ideology and our actions as a nation when it comes to educating our children so that they grow into healthy adults and contributing citizens. Pennington's vision highlights the policy changes that are needed as well as how to make the systems cooperate to achieve that vision. We do not have the will and we do not take responsibility for making America live up to its ideology.

At the Public Education Network we have proposed a strategy to build public will that leads to public responsibility and action. Briefly, we are focused on building a constituency of organizations and individuals across the nation. To define public will, the Network and Education Week have developed a national poll to determine what the public thinks its responsibility is and how Americans will hold public officials accountable. Second, the Network has launched a viral campaign á la "Tobacco Free Kids" to give citizens an opportunity to make their voices heard on the issues facing public education. The effort known as "GiveKidsGoodSchools.com" was launched in December 2002. Finally, PEN is beginning a three-year effort to develop a national narrative and a set of messages about public responsibility for public education. We will work to put those messages into popular culture and into the public domain, particularly during the nation's electoral cycles.

Why are we doing this work now? Because America must align its policies with its ideology. Then Pennington's vision for a coherent K-14 system will become a reality.

DISMANTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

Christine Sturgis

Hillary Pennington's vision clearly outlines the direction for building an effective K – 14 education and youth development system. My principal concern here is to make such a comprehensive and rational system—or even the defective one we have right now—work for the benefit of our most vulnerable youth.

Dropping out of school is a life-changing event that increases the likelihood of disconnection, as is incarceration, leaving the foster care system, and having a child.

Today, we are losing eight percent of our 16-24-year-olds who become disconnected from school and the labor market, mostly between the ages of 14-19.

To ensure that all young people will be able to participate in, and benefit from, the system Pennington advocates, we need to look broadly at the opportunities available to young people and their families. Our most vulnerable young people and their parents are supported, or in many cases trapped, by several other systems beyond the schools. Each one of these—child welfare, TANF, juvenile/criminal justice—can significantly shape the daily lives and long-term opportunities for young people. To serve our most vulnerable youth effectively, we must re-align all the existing systems to support the comprehensive educational opportunities and supports described by Pennington.

Before commenting on Pennington's vision in detail, I must first highlight a "new reality" that is tragically shaping our environment. As quickly as our nation churns out innovations, we also manufacture new policies, regulations and procedures that deny children and youth access to education and increase "access" to the juvenile and criminal justice system. Often referred to as the "schools-to-prison pipeline," or the prison track, these policies horrifically undermine the very education reform our nation has pinned its hopes on, the No Child Left Behind Act. Although there is no race-specific language in the policies that make up the prison track, the policies are consistently implemented in such a way as to have a disproportionate impact upon children, youth and families of color. These punitive laws, policies and practices exclude children from education, limit employment, and disenfranchise young people by using previous incarceration as a powerful, virtually permanent, disability. What is particularly insidious about these laws is that they are increasingly designed without taking into consideration the highly differential treatment that people of color receive in the juvenile and criminal justice system. Once you understand how the school to prison pipeline works, it is pretty easy to imagine how opportunities are chopped away once a young person is trapped in the prison track, especially those who have yet to be taught to read above 4th grade level.

Five different sets of policies shape the prison track:

- Limiting or denying access to education
- Increased incarceration of youth
- Creating separate, but unequal schooling
- Limiting employment and postsecondary education
- Disenfranchisement

Limiting or denying access to education: "Zero tolerance" school disciplinary policies send a strong message that children are not really wanted in school. In many states, such policies result in actual denial of an education.

Only about half of the states ensure that children who are expelled have a right to enroll in

another school. In 1998, 3.2 million students were suspended during the school year. This is an increase from 1.7 million in 1974, despite the fact that violence in schools has remained relatively stable during that time.[1] Twenty-five percent of African-American male students were suspended at least once over a four-year period.[2] In Milwaukee, only three percent of the suspensions were related to the use of drugs, alcohol or weapons; the rest were for "behavioral issues."[3] Once again, the use of suspensions and expulsions has a disproportionate impact on young people of color. In 1972, no state suspended nine percent or more of its white students while six states suspended nine percent or more of its black students. In the 1998–1999 school year, only one state suspended more than nine percent of its white students, while 35 states suspended at least that percentage of black students.[4]

Increased incarceration of youth: Since 1992, despite an overall drop in crime, 47 states have made their juvenile justice systems more punitive. Young people of color receive differential treatment every step of the way through the juvenile justice system: from arrests, referral to juvenile court, detention, formal processing, waivers to adult courts, disposition, and incarceration to juvenile facilities and adult prisons. Black and Latino youth consistently receive more severe punishments and are more likely to receive jail time than white youth for the same offenses. Moreover, black males are six times more likely to be admitted to state juvenile facilities for crimes against persons than their white counterparts; four times more likely for property crimes; an astonishing 30 times more likely to be detained in state juvenile facilities for drug offenses than white males.[5] The result is that minority youth—African-American, Latino, and Native American—disproportionately spend more time enduring the horrendous experience of being locked up without access to positive developmental opportunities. Once released, they face enormous barriers to accessing education, even though education is what they most need, given that 33% of all juvenile offenders read below the fourth-grade level.

Creating separate, but unequal education: In Chicago, Philadelphia, New York and elsewhere, students deemed to be "troublemakers" are transferred to alternative schools without assessments to diagnose the nature of their troubles. In Pennsylvania, the state legislature passed a bill in 2002 which mandates that all students in Philadelphia who are on probation or are coming out of placement in a juvenile facility or prison must be evaluated at a transition center and then must attend an alternative education program.[6] The result is that young people of color complete high school through the GED route at higher rates than whites—earning an educational credential that has lower economic value in the eyes of employers.

Limiting employment and postsecondary education: Young people who are denied an education or are caught up in the justice system later encounter substantial barriers to earning a living. Virtually every state changed its laws during the 1990s to promote more prosecution of juveniles in adult criminal court, making it more likely for juveniles to have felony convictions. Ex-felons, regardless of their offense, are generally prevented from pursuing many types of jobs in the fields of childcare, education, security, nursing and home healthcare.[7] The irony is that a young person who has turned his/her life around is the very type of person we should want to choose careers in youth work or teaching. In addition, these ex-felons are, by law, ineligible for Pell grants and other student financial aid, thereby increasing the difficulty of being able to pursue postsecondary education.

Disenfranchisement: The most frightening component of the prison track is the disenfranchisement occurring across the majority of our states that limits the voting rights of ex-felons. One in seven African American males (14%) is either currently or permanently disenfranchised from voting as a result of a felony conviction. One out of every four black men in the nine states that permanently bar ex-felons from voting are disenfranchised for life. At the present rate of

black incarceration, it is estimated that in the next few years 40 percent of black men will be permanently barred from the polls in the states with this restriction.[8]

The school to prison pipeline is a result of a mixture of policies, regulations and bureaucratic procedures that operate according to a different set of values, beliefs and results than those upon which Pennington's vision is built. The cumulative effect of these policies – both intentional and often unintentional – is to create a separate and very unequal pathway. Therefore, we must operate on two fronts - pushing for effective education while challenging the prison track - if we are going to build a system that works for all of our children and youth. Each and every policy and implementation decision requires us to ask: How would this be expanding the college track for vulnerable youth? What can be done to make sure this isn't reinforcing the prison track?

Create Advocacy for the Most Vulnerable

To make our current system work for vulnerable youth and in the spirit of the larger vision urged by Pennington, I recommend the following steps:

1) All systems that serve young people and their families, including education, must share in the responsibility of keeping children attached to schooling and further education. Probation, parole, juvenile justice, police, child welfare, mental health and schools must all be held accountable for how well they connect and re-connect children and youth to education. Schools should be measured in terms of their "stickiness" or retention, i.e., how well they keep children engaged with them. Probation services, for example, should be measured on how quickly they get a student enrolled in a permanent school. Educators must pay attention to policies and procedures of the foster care system. Probation and parole officers need to know how to accelerate the enrollment process of young people back into schools. Mental health and substance abuse providers must have supportive relationships with the schools and community based organizations serving youth.

2) Establish responsibility within city or county government for an Office of Youth Services that has public responsibility for tracking youth, coordinating services, and identifying areas of racial disparity of vulnerable youth between ages 14-24. Pennington is absolutely right in recommending that we increase the visibility of young people. We must also re-claim our young people. Youth may be invisible to the education system, but they certainly are not to their parents, siblings, police or youth worker. Creating mayoral or county council responsibility for our young people ages 14-24 will immediately create the creative tensions needed to engage the systems in more effective methods of providing services. Given the role of all the other systems in shaping young people's life trajectories, the responsibility for ensuring that young people do not fall through the cracks between the systems or into the prison track should be in the hands of the mayor and city or county government. The Office of Youth Services should be responsible for initiating research into the practices, regulations and policies that lead to the differential treatment of young people of color in the juvenile justice system and other systems. By disaggregating the data, the Office of Youth Services can engage the public systems in reflecting on the underlying causes that generate the disparities.

Powerful bureaucratic barriers are raised whenever this idea is posed. Yet, Los Angeles has demonstrated that we are able to keep young people attached to the justice system by tracking young people through the Gang Injunction database, even if they are trying to carve out a positive pathway. We should certainly be able to take that same technology and set of practices and dedicate it to keeping young people in school.

3) Re-align policies, including financial, instructional, promotional and disciplinary, to act as incentives to keep children in school: A system that works for the most vulnerable youth needs to be designed to have incentives for organizations to keep young people in the primary system, rather than sorting them into a separate, but unequal system. Re-aligning the policies and funding incentives, especially those between the education and justice systems, will require intergovernmental collaboration and the leadership of the governor, state legislature and other policymakers. For example, there should be financial incentives to re-enroll youth who have dropped out or been incarcerated. There should also be financial incentives to invest in alternatives to detention rather than incarcerating youth in facilities that isolate them from their families, communities and schools and financial disincentives should also be established for suspending, expelling or excluding children from school.

4) Develop a policy structure to support small high schools and alternative high schools to reconnect young people: As Pennington describes, we need increased incentives to create more small schools, CBO schools, and alternative high schools. The investments should be similar in scope to the investments our country is now making in public charter schools. Equally important are policies that support the acceleration of learning and credit accumulation. For vulnerable youth, the very elements of the system that are designed to promote high quality learning can actually become a barrier, some of them too high to be overcome alone. For example, many young people who fall off the pathway to college or into the prison track may never be able to accumulate enough Carnegie units to meet high school graduation requirements. Thus, competency-based diplomas are essential. A system that is committed to the success of all youth must offer alternative paths around every barrier and monitor itself on how effectively young people are able to find their way back to the path to college and family-sustaining employment.

5) Work experience and career development have to be central to any system if it is going to work for young people from poor families. I know that Pennington agrees that work is a critical component for interrelated and equally important reasons:

- Low-income youth need to make money to support themselves or contribute to family income.
- Most poor people live in poor neighborhoods where young people have limited access to informal labor market networks that expose them to a wide range of jobs. Thus, career development is a critical piece of making school meaningful.
- Work is a developmental tool (as is service-learning, social justice, arts, and sports) in which young people build relationships with adults, take on adult responsibilities, make contributions to others and apply their learning to real-life situations.
- The on-going arguments about school or work, college or career are moot. Vulnerable youth need to be able to pursue both. Furthermore, if we are going to convince young people that staying in school is important, we need to carve out pathways for them that are as meaningful now as they will be in the future.

The challenge is how to get from where we are to where we want to go. Of all Pennington's points, addressing the financial incentives to support youth in completing their education is the most important. However, I strongly believe that her additional recommendations for changes in the governance of the system will only distract us from addressing the dynamics of the prison pipeline and its implications for the ongoing efforts to raise academic standards across the nation.

In terms of public will, the only way we are going to build enough demand for high school reform and ensure that vulnerable youth are effec-

tively served is through **community organizing and youth organizing**. The denial of education and the nourishment of the prison track is certainly a civil rights issue. But the answer is not necessarily in additional laws. In fact, transitions plans from juvenile justice and child welfare are already required by federal statute. The answer is in communities having enough power to make sure that the public systems care enough to serve them effectively. Furthermore, community organizing can bring expertise that we desperately need in the public sector—the ability to develop a relational culture, that is a culture built on interpersonal relations of respect and trust.

At a recent meeting about high quality alternative education, often referred to as "transformational education," one student chimed into a conversation about what makes effective education: "It doesn't make any difference what you teach us. What's important is that you love us and you show it by caring that we are learning." So across the top of my notes I scribbled, "How do we build a bureaucracy built on love?" The word love doesn't find its way into policy discussions very often, but in this case it is imperative. We know that children learn within the context of supportive relationships. But we don't yet know how to build a bureaucracy that nurtures the development of relationships.

That question of building a bureaucracy around love and relationships has been gnawing at me without any resolution until I had the opportunity to learn more about community organizing. We have been relying heavily on bureaucratic and market-driven strategies and are still stumbling on ourselves. We must draw from the democratic strategies of community organizing. We need to ask groups like the Oakland Community Organizations, People and Communities Together in Miami, ACORN, Austin Interfaith, and Padres Unidos to guide us in learning how to build relational culture.

We must also learn from our young people. We need to start by listening to them. They are organizing and are creating the demand for real change. They are ensuring that small schools are equitably implemented. They are demanding that high schools have libraries and computer centers. They are stopping counties from building expensive and unnecessary jails. They are demanding the respect that is critical for ensuring effective learning communities. They can help us avoid the mistakes of implementation that undermine school reforms and guide us in finding the right mix of instructional strategies that motivate, challenge, and support them. We only need to turn to Youth United for Change in Philadelphia, Books Not Bars in San Francisco, and the Community Coalition in Los Angeles to learn how young people are shaping the policies that affect them, their families and their communities.

6) Thus, I would add a sixth policy goal: **invest in community organizations and youth organizing focusing on education:** A public/private partnership should be established to increase the funding for community organizing and youth organizing that is independent of public institutions, uses democratic practices, and builds the leadership talents of low-income adults and youth. Increasing the capacity of community organizations in low-income areas is critically important given that the underlying issues facing the schools are often entwined in other municipal policies, such as housing, economic development and policing.

Let us think more deeply about our young people. Teenagers make mistakes. We all do. Many teenagers are trying to negotiate a world that is more complex than most of us have ever had to face. So what appears to be a behavioral issue to us may actually be a relatively rational response, perhaps short-sighted, but still rational, to the world around them. We need to listen carefully to understand their choices. And we need to make sure that we never take away their ability to learn, no matter how large the mistake.

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AUTHORS AND COMMENTATORS

- **Gene Bottoms, Ed D.**, Senior Vice President, Southern Regional Education Board, and Director of the *High Schools That Work* initiative since 1987. HSTW is the largest effort in America to improve high schools for career-bound students. The program now involves over 1,100 high schools in 27 states. Prior to joining SREB, Bottoms served as Executive Director of the American Vocational Association, where he emphasized academics as an integral part of vocational education at the secondary and postsecondary levels. He also served as Director of Educational Improvement for the Georgia Department of Education for 13 years, overseeing improvement efforts in both vocational and academic education. Dr. Bottoms earned his doctorate in guidance and counseling at the University of Georgia.

  CONTACT: *High Schools that Work, Southern Regional Education Board 592 10th Street, NW, Atlanta, GA 30318-5790; Tel. (404) 875-9211; E-mail: gene.bottoms@sreb.org*

- **Andrew Hahn, Ph.D.**, professor and co-chair of the M.B.A. and M.M. concentration in child, youth and family services, and director of the Heller Graduate School Program on Innovations in Social Policy at Brandeis University. Hahn conducts policy analysis, evaluation, training and demonstration projects for federal agencies, corporations and major foundations on employment, education, youth and community development. His books, *What Works in Youth Employment* and *Dropouts in America: Enough is Known for Action*, are syntheses of practical lessons for program managers and policymakers about effective youth policy strategies. An advisor and board member to many groups, he serves as guest columnist in Youth Today.

  CONTACT: *Brandeis University, Center for Youth and Communities/Institute for Sustainable Development, Heller School 415 South Street, Waltham, MA 02254-9110; Tel. (781) 736-3774; E-mail: ahahn@brandeis.edu*

- **Samuel Halperin, Ph.D.**, is the founder and, currently, senior fellow of the American Youth Policy Forum. A political scientist (Washington University), he directed the legislative program of the U.S. Office of Education, served as Deputy Assistant Secretary at the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and, from 1973–1981, was president of the Institute for Educational Leadership. As study director of the William T. Grant Foundation on Work, Family and Citizenship, he was responsible for *The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America* and *The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth* and *Young Families* and over 20 other studies in the 1980's. He serves on the boards of several nonprofit youth agencies.

  CONTACT: *American Youth Policy Forum, 1836 Jefferson Place, NW, Washington, DC 20036-2505; Tel. (202-775-9731); E-mail: shalperin@aypf.org*

- **Karen Hein, M.D.**, President of the William T. Grant Foundation. Hein is a physician leader in health policy, an expert in health needs of vulnerable populations (particularly children and youth), and experienced in innovative health program development and health care reform legislation. She served as staff on the U.S. Senate Finance Committee (1993-94) and as Executive Officer of the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences (1995-1998). Dr. Hein has written over 150 articles, chapters, and abstracts related to adolescent health. In 1987, she founded the nation's first adolescent HIV/AIDS program, and her book, *AIDS: Trading Fears for Facts*, broke ground in disseminating information about the topic to young people.

  CONTACT: *William T. Grant Foundation, 570 Lexington Avenue, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10022-6837; Tel. (212) 752-0071; E-mail: khein@wtgrantfdn.org*

- **John F. (Jack) Jennings**, is Director of the Center on Education Policy which he founded in 1995. From 1967 to 1994, he served as subcommittee staff director and then as general counsel for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Labor. In these positions, he was involved in nearly every major education debate held at the national level, including the reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Vocational Education Act, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Higher Education Act, National School Lunch Act, Child Nutrition Act, and Goals 2000: Educate America Act. Mr. Jennings serves on the boards of Educational Testing Service, Title I Independent Review Panel, Pew Forum on Standards-Based Reform, Maryland Academic Intervention Steering Committee, and the Maryland Visionary Panel. He earned an A.B. from Loyola University and a J.D. from Northwestern University School of Law.

  CONTACT: *Center on Education Policy, 1001 Connecticut Avenue NW, Suite 522, Washington, D.C., 20036; Tel. (202) 822-8065; E-mail: jack.jennings@cep-dc.org*

- **Alan Khazei and Michael Brown**, Co-founders in 1988 of City Year, the voluntary national service program which advocates a year of full-time public service as a civic rite of passage for all young adults. Both graduates of Harvard College and Harvard Law School, they inspired the federal government's AmeriCorps program and spread City Year beyond Boston to 13 other cities, engaging over 6,000 young adults over the past 14 years. President Brown and CEO Khazei have been widely recognized as among America's most creative social entrepreneurs whose talents have enabled then to meld public, private and philanthropic energies into a series of new inventions to harness the energy and idealism of youth.

  CONTACT: *City Year, 285 Columbus Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts, 02216; Brown: Tel. (617) 927-2345; E-mail: mbrown@cityyear.org Khazei: Tel. (617-927-2411; E-mail: akhazei@cityyear.org*

- **James Kielsmeier, Ph.D.**, is founder, President and CEO of the National Youth Leadership Council, a nonprofit/civil society organization based in St. Paul, Minnesota. Since 1983, he has engaged in the design and implementation of comprehensive state and federal youth service and service-learning models. He organized the first Minnesota Governor's Task Force on Youth Service and Work in 1986, which led to state legislation and funding in 1987 and 1989 for youth service in Minnesota's schools and colleges. Currently, he co-chairs the service-learning committee of the Minnesota Governor's Commission on National and Community Service.

  CONTACT: *National Youth Leadership Council, 1667 Snelling Avenue, North, Suite D 300, St. Paul, MN 55108; Tel. (651) 631-3672; E-mail: jimk@nylc.org*

- **Hilary Pennington** is co-founder of Jobs for the Future, widely recognized as a leading research and policy development organization on issues of workforce development and future work requirements. As CEO, she oversees an extensive research, consulting and policy agenda. Hilary has been instrumental in the School to Work movement, a member of the Clinton Presidential Transition Team, and co-chair of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Expanding Training Opportunities. She has worked in corporate strategy and public policy at Aetna and the Boston Consulting Group. A graduate of the Yale School of Management and Yale College, she holds a graduate degree in social anthropology from Oxford University.

  CONTACT: *Jobs for the Future, 88 Broad Street, 8th Floor, Boston, MA 02110; Tel. (617) 728-4446; E-mail: hpenning@jff.org*

- **Wendy Puriefoy**, a nationally-recognized expert on school reform and civil society is a passionate advocate of education equity for poor and disadvantaged children. She is President of Public Education Network (PEN), the nation's largest network of community-based school reform organizations, founded in 1991. (PEN reaches more than 10.6 million children in 1,200 school districts and 16,000 schools nationwide). A leader in philanthropy, she served as executive vice president and COO of The Boston Foundation and serves today on the boards of DEMOS, Hasbro Children's Foundation, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and the National Center for Family Philanthropy. Ms. Puriefoy earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from William Smith College and three master's degrees from Boston University in African American Studies, American Studies and American Colonial History.

  CONTACT: Public Education Network, 601 Thirteenth Street, NW, Suite 900 North, Washington, DC 20005; Tel.(202)628-7460; E-mail: wpuriefoy@publiceducation.org

- Shirley Sagawa was the lead U.S. Senate staffer for both the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which created Learn and Serve America, and the 1993 legislation that created AmeriCorps. She has served as a presidential appointee in both the first Bush and Clinton administrations, as first Vice Chair of the Commission on National and Community Service, as the founding managing director of the Corporation for National Service, in the Clinton White House on the Domestic Policy Council staff, and as Deputy Chief of Staff to the First Lady. She is the co-founder of Sagawa/Jospin, which specializes in nonprofit strategy, partnerships and program design.

  CONTACT: Sagawa/Jospin, 12 West Oak Street, Alexandria, VA 22301; Tel. (703) 548-4919; E-mail: ssagawa@sagawajospin.com

- **Robert B. Schwartz** has long been involved with policymakers in trying to discover the keys to improving schools. Working with federal policymakers, governors, and state and local leaders, he has supported a standards-based reform approach. But the complexity of high school reform is leading him to consider a different, more holistic approach, that takes into consideration the needs and interests of high school-age learners. He suggests that reformers from the standards movement should forge a new synthesis with school-based network reformers (such as High Schools That Work, Coalition for Essential Schools, America's Choice) and advocates of market-based approaches that draw on the strengths of all these reform strategies in order to accomplish the ambitious goal of improving outcomes for high school students.

  CONTACT: Harvard Graduate School of Education, Gutman 427, Appian Way, Cambridge, MA 02138; Tel. (617) 496-6303; E-mail: robert_schwartz@gse.harvard.edu

- **Warren Simmons, Ph.D.**, is Director of the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University. The Institute was established in 1993 to generate, share, and act on knowledge that improves conditions and outcomes in American schools, particularly in urban areas and in schools serving disadvantaged students. Before joining the Institute, Dr. Simmons was Executive Director of the Philadelphia Education Fund, a nonprofit organization that helped the School District of Philadelphia to fund, develop, and implement new academic standards, content-based professional development, standards-based curriculum resources and comprehensive school reform.

  CONTACT: Annenberg Institute for School Reform, Brown University, Box 1985, Providence, RI 02912; Tel. (401) 863-7675; E-mail: warren_simmons@brown.edu

- **Dorothy Stoneman,** previously a teacher and civil rights activist, founded the Youth Action Program in East Harlem and created the first YouthBuild program. In YouthBuild, low income young people build housing for homeless people while completing their high school education. As part of a strong emphasis on leadership development, students govern their own program and participate in community affairs, developing a thoughtful voice for youth. Stoneman leads the effort to replicate YouthBuild, bringing larger numbers of disenfranchised young adults into community engagement in low income urban communities. There are now 180 YouthBuild programs assisted by a federal budget line item (in HUD) and diverse other funding sources. Stoneman is president of YouthBuild USA, the national support center for these programs, and chair of the National YouthBuild Coalition of 900 organizations that advocates for them in Congress. In 1996, she was awarded the MacArthur Foundation's "genius" fellowship. In 2000, the Independent Sector honored her with the John W. Gardner Leadership Award. She also served as co-chair of the selection committee for The Ford Foundation's "Leaders for a Changing World" award program.

  CONTACT: YouthBuild USA, 58 Day Street, P.O. Box 440322, Somerville, MA 02144; Tel. (617) 623-9900; E-mail: dstoneman@youthbuild.org

- **Chris Sturgis** is the Program Officer at the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation responsible for "Success in School" grantmaking to increase educational opportunities for vulnerable youth, especially those who have dropped out or been excluded from school, to prepare them for college and careers. She is co-chair of the Youth Transition Funders Group which seeks to ensure that young people are connected to education and employment and on their way to being able to support a family by age 25. Before joining the Mott Foundation, Chris was involved in the school-to-career initiative as Associate Director for School to Work at the MassJobs Council in Massachusetts. Her other leadership posts include Director of Finance and Planning at Boston Senior Home Care and Director of Programs at Greater Boston Rehabilitation Services. Chris' experience includes political organizing and a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

  CONTACT: Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, 1200 Mott Foundation Building, 503 South Saginaw, Flint, MI 48502-1851; Tel. (810) 238-5651; E-mail: csturgis@mott.org

EDITOR

- **Anne C. Lewis, Editor**, is a celebrated education policy writer and commentator who has been national columnist for Phi Delta Kappan magazine more than 20 years. She is the author of seminal reports on youth service, youth transition programs, urban school reforms, and rural education.

  CONTACT: Tel. (301-229-2521); E-mail: anneclewis@earthlink.net

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